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*"THE AMERICAN IDENTITY:
EXPLORING THE CULTURAL BASIS
OF A FREE SOCIETY"*

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* * *

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"Should the Federal Government Protect Individual Rights?"

Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE



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COMPOSITION MANAGER
Anita Fedora

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Rochelle Frank

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Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5811.
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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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On Stanley Fish

I was dismayed to read in your August issue the review by Kenneth R. Craycraft, Jr., of Stanley Fish's *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech*. I have noticed lately in certain other "conservative" publications a tendency for some self-styled conservatives to try to derive some benefit from so-called "postmodern" ideas, on the theory, as Craycraft puts it, that "the enemies of our enemies are our friends, no matter where we find them." But I had thought that *Chronicles* at least was safe from this serious corruption. Apparently I was wrong.

Craycraft seems to think that such individuals as Fish—or Jameson, Rorty, etc.—have successfully "subverted" (a favorite word of theirs) the claims of pure rationality, etc., of the liberals (or whatever term one chooses for the other side). That leaves the ground clear for the rebuilding of religious faith, for example. Alas, this analysis makes at least four serious errors.

First, what Craycraft thinks are caricatures of Fish's position are actually more insightful about deconstructionism than is Craycraft himself. The basic unacknowledged premises of this ideology are: first, everything is *always* political, including language and literature—this they have cribbed from Marx; and, second, there is no aspect of truth, in reality or in the text, that *transcends* the cultural context of the writer. Alas, the caricaturists have been unfair to poor Fish, who actually upholds truth, according to Craycraft. He cites a passage in which Fish states that we *can* "rely on truths that according to our present lights seem indisputable." Our present lights? *Seem* indisputable? This is a claim that there is, in the last analysis, no real truth or no truth that we can really know. It is precisely the claim of the ancient Sophists, without one iota of originality and with no Socrates or Cardinal John Henry Newman to argue effectively against it.

Second, the analysis fails to distinguish the soft and hard versions of the deconstructionist doctrine and then to determine which of these is upheld by Fish. The soft version would be: a writer's (or a reader's) cultural-historical context influences his view of reality and of any given book he is writing or reading.

The hard version: this context *inevitably and completely determines* his view. The soft version is, of course, true, but trivial because no one has ever denied it for a moment. It allows for an element of transcendence and freedom, which we intuitively know exists in the remarkable individual. The hard version of the doctrine might be interesting as far as the history of philosophy is concerned because no one appears to have made such a total claim before, but it suffers from one little problem: it is manifestly false. Thus Fish is either trivial or deluded.

Third, the "interpretive community" of which Fish speaks exists in an ontological and epistemological vacuum, given his belief that truth issues *from* this community. Craycraft, somewhat pathetically, embraces this aspect of Fish's theory because it undoubtedly reminds him of the Church as interpretive community and therefore acts as a counterweight to the excessive individualism of liberalism. The Church is a community in which inheres the Holy Spirit, one of the three persons of the Trinity. It is therefore the vessel of the highest immutable truths, those of God. But of course Craycraft, being a theologian, has taken Theology 101 and already knows this. Fish, by contrast, considers all interpretive communities as equal and as generators of meaning rather than recipients of transcendent meaning. Arrogantly, he states that he personally has not received revelation and so cannot accept it. Does this give comfort to Craycraft in his acceptance of Fish as a champion of the struggle *against* individualism? Actually, conservatives must always uphold a robust individualism in the context of acceptance of a higher moral code that constrains destructive behavior. Fish is anarchic in his impulses; for this reason, as C.S. Lewis might put it, he is attacking liberalism *from below*, not from above.

Fourth, Craycraft simply misses the outright evil in Fish. Admittedly, this is something hard to discern. Fish's sarcastic, sneering attitude is a mask for an underlying rage and will to power. Perhaps easier to understand for Craycraft would be Fish's secret campaign to persuade the provost of Duke to block the appointment of any faculty who were members of the National Association of Scholars to key committees involving

tenure or curriculum decisions. This is the man praised by Craycraft for his “devastating salvo against liberal intolerance”!

—Jonathan Chaves

Chairman, Department of East Asian
Languages and Literatures
George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

Kenneth R. Craycraft Replies:

Professor Chaves says that a “basic unacknowledged” premise of deconstructionist thought is that everything is always political. Wrong. At least, insofar as Stanley Fish might be loosely called a deconstructionist (a dubious premise), he *fully and explicitly acknowledges* that everything is always political. Professor Chaves announces this as though it self-evidently is an evil doctrine (he seems to believe that there are all sorts of self-evident truths, something that is not self-evident to me) that necessarily denies the reality of truth which transcends “cultural context.”

I don’t know about Fish, but I most emphatically affirm the reality of objective truth that transcends particular political or cultural contexts. But so what? To acknowledge this is to acknowledge that any expression of that truth is necessarily determined by the habits, mores, manners, customs, morals, grammars, and idioms of particular communities. In short, all language that points toward transcendent truth is *political*. This is an idea as old as that great postmodernist St. Augustine of Hippo, as expressed in that subversive deconstructionist tract *De Doctrina Christiana*.

Professor Chaves confuses the sign with the thing, as though he has immediate knowledge of transcendent truth, a plain contradiction. All truth is mediated through language, and all language is an expression of particular politics, including the (largely and broadly discredited) Enlightenment liberal democratic epistemology of Professor Chaves. Saint Paul, John Henry Newman, and I see through a mirror darkly, “according to our present lights,” until that time beyond time when we will know in full. The “interpretive community” to which I belong does not originate the truth-claim; it receives it. But its expression of the truth-claim is always strongly em-

bedded and never exhaustive. If Fish believes that all interpretive communities are created equal, I strongly disagree. But that does not change the reality that any expression of truth is particular to such communities. Moreover, since I am not a conservative but a Roman Catholic Christian, I do not share Professor Chaves’ interest in upholding individualism, robust or otherwise.

Fish is, of course, very critical of the NAS, as am I. The NAS is composed (principally) of a bunch of liberals who are whining and moaning because they got what they wanted: a university based

upon the suspension of particular truth in the name of a “universalist” rationality and free speech. In such a university, all that remains are will and power. I probably disagree with Professor Fish about the particular truth to be defended in the university against free speech. But I agree completely with him that a university *should* presume and defend particular truth against an ideology of free speech that ends in assertions of raw power. Ironically, the NAS still beats the very free-speech drum that got the university into this mess in the first place.

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

THE TERM LIMIT issue has been sweeping the country. Since 1990, voters in 15 states have used the petition and referendum process to impose term limits on their state legislators.

Earlier this year in Illinois, term limit supporters filed 437,088 petition signatures from almost every county calling for a statewide referendum on term limits. The proposed “Eight is Enough” constitutional amendment would limit state legislators to no more than eight years in the General Assembly.

Illinois voters are fed up with the callous unresponsiveness of entrenched political insiders. At a time when the state has monumental budget problems and is in serious need of meaningful tax reform, most Illinois General Assembly members are more concerned with giving themselves a pay raise. Illinois Senate President James “Pate” Philip, a 28-year incumbent earning \$55,420, was quoted by the Associated Press as saying, “We are so grossly underpaid it’s unbelievable.” With Philip’s support, most lawmakers voted to award themselves a 9 percent pay raise, in addition to cost-of-living allowances. This is the kind of political-insider government we can do without in Illinois, and voters who support limiting elected officials to no more than eight years in the same office do so as a rational means to get new people with fresh ideas in government.

In a statewide opinion poll published recently by the *Chicago Tribune*, nearly 70 percent of voters said they would vote in support of the term limit amendment if it appeared on the ballot in November.

But in the midst of all this support for change, the Chicago Bar Association (CBA)—a registered lobby group of 21,000 lawyers—rushed forward to protect the political status quo. The CBA filed a lawsuit to block the Eight is Enough term limit referendum from appearing on the November 1994 ballot statewide.

Interestingly, the CBA also lobbied the General Assembly in support of a pay raise for judges. On the same day that the legislators approved the judicial pay raise, the Illinois Supreme Court agreed to hear the CBA challenge to the term limit referendum. Six weeks later, on August 10, in a 4-3 split decision, the Illinois Supreme Court denied voters the chance to vote on the term limit referendum this November. In a cowardly action, the court refused to explain why it will not allow Illinois voters the chance to participate fully in the democratic process.

Illinois is the first state in the nation to reject term limits before the people have had a chance to vote on the issue. The Illinois Supreme Court’s ruling against the Eight is Enough referendum is a slap in the faces of more than six million voters and is an insult to the highest ideals of democracy. The court’s majority ruling ignores the fact that the Illinois Constitution clearly gives voters the right to reform their legislature. The constitution provides citizens with the power of initiative and referendum. The authors of our state constitution wanted voters to be able to propose changes to the legislature in cases where, through self-inter-

est, the General Assembly opposed them.

Accordingly, the dissenting justices soundly refused the Chicago Bar Association's claim that the Eight is Enough proposal was not a suitable subject for a citizen-initiated referendum. Justice Moses Harrison, with Justices James Heiple and Benjamin Miller joining him in dissenting from the majority opinion, writes, "Section 3 of article XIV reserved to the people of this State the right to advance this amendment and to vote on it. . . . Democracy should be permitted to take its course, as the drafters of our constitution intended. To hold that the law mandates a contrary result is a fiction that venerates the power of our incumbent legislators and demeans the intelligence of their constituents." In an editorial published August 24, the *Wall Street Journal* said, "The court's decision reeks of politics . . . Term limits is the fourth initiative affecting the Legislature it has removed from the ballot."

The term limit issue needs to be decided at the ballot box. In losing the right to vote on this referendum, Illinois voters are losing ownership of their government. If this ruling is allowed to stand, Illinois will not have a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." What we will continue to have is a government of the incumbents, by the lawyers, and for the lobbyists.

—Pat Quinn
Treasurer of Illinois

JACK KEMP is out, as far as we California College Republicans are concerned. On June 18, we overturned our previous endorsement of Jack Kemp for President in 1996. This reversal of position has been two years in the making.

When Kemp was originally endorsed two years ago, it seemed that he was the unquestionable heir to Ronald Reagan and the conservative movement. However, as time went on, it became painfully clear that Kemp was becoming more moderate in his positions. Kemp has become a conservative who will not fight to cut Leviathan's government spending (evidenced by his tenure at HUD), who refuses to combat liberal assaults on American culture or acknowledge that there is a problem with illegal immigration, and who endorses an internationalist foreign policy that does not consider the national interests of the United

States. In other words, Jack Kemp has become a "Big Government Conservative." This is confirmed by his own statements identifying himself as a "bleeding-heart conservative" from the "Lane Kirkland wing of the Republican Party."

The endorsement of Jack Kemp was rapidly becoming an embarrassment to the California College Republicans. Yet the organization's board of directors did not have the courage to reverse its position. To them, Kemp was still the ever-positive quarterback of the conservatives. However, the tide changed in 1994. Ted Soojian, a principled conservative, was elected chairman of the California College Republicans in April, along with his entire slate of candidates for major office. This paralleled the election of Tom Pauken as chairman of the Texas Republican Party and the nomination in Virginia of Oliver North for United States Senate.

The stage was then set for the board of directors meeting on June 18, 1994, which appropriately took place in Orange County, California. At this meeting, the endorsement of Jack Kemp in 1996 was formally revoked. During this meeting, the board decided that we need to encourage and express thanks to those conservatives who stand for unabashedly conservative positions and who will fight for those positions to the end.

Patrick Buchanan fits this description perfectly. There is perhaps no conservative who has risked as much as Buchanan to stand for conservative principles. He fought for us in 1992, when no other conservative would. Furthermore, 1992 was not a solitary incident. Buchanan has repeatedly fought for us since he entered the conservative movement in his 20's. Patrick Buchanan also represents something more—a candidate who will fight to bring the American Republic to a new golden age of freedom, federalism, traditional values, and a foreign policy that puts America first. Therefore, a resolution was passed stating that "the California College Republicans stand fully behind Pat Buchanan in his endeavors and encourage him to run for the presidency in 1996 to return the Old Right to its rightful place as a true conservative movement."

The California College Republicans have fired a shot heard around the Republic. The Republican Party must stand for an agenda of limited govern-

ment, traditional values, and an American interest-based foreign policy. If the other states spanning this nation fight for the values that conservatives hold dear, then we can do no less than retake the Republican Party and make it once again an establishment that our forefathers would be proud of.

—Corey R. Weber

RUDOLPH GIULIANI, in one of his first actions as mayor of New York City, eliminated a controversial set-aside program that had been instituted in 1991 by the Dinkins administration. Considering the extent to which the use of quotas now permeates American society, any victory for the merit system is reason for celebration.

The policy in question was, if nothing else, a tribute to those who are determined to balkanize people along lines of race, ethnicity, and gender. It authorized the awarding of city contracts to businesses owned by—who else?—"women and minorities," even if their bids were as much as 10 percent higher than the lowest bidder. Under this affirmative action policy, the city's goal had been for the politically correct firms to perform 20 percent of its contractual work.

During last year's mayoral campaign, David Dinkins frequently pointed out that the policy had increased from 9 to 17 the percentage of city contracts awarded to "women and minorities," wowing the sort of folks who keep track of such things. The fact that Mr. Dinkins considered this one of his proudest accomplishments as mayor tells you all you need to know about his unlamented tenure.

Giuliani's executive order was greeted with predictable cries of outrage from the usual liberal suspects that have brought a once-great city almost to its knees. "No small business can compete against the giants of the world," said an "incensed" Harriet Michel, president of an outfit called the National Minority Supplier Development Council. Her comment raises the question of why the policy's beneficiaries were not "small businesses," instead of the standard "women and minorities." "Our members are only trying to compete and this was a way to help," said Roy A. Hastick, president of the Caribbean-American Chamber of Commerce. For the purposes of affirmative action, *foreign-born* blacks are classified as a "minority," un-

like, say, Russian or Irish immigrants.

In issuing his executive order, Mayor Giuliani called the policy “indefensible” as a constitutional matter. His opinion was validated a few days later, in the form of a state supreme court ruling in favor of one of several white male-owned construction companies that had sued the city after their low bids went for naught. Justice Walter B. Tolub of Manhattan held that the 10 percent price preference violated a New York State law requiring government to accept the lowest bids for all contractual work. The city has canceled a number of the tainted contracts and is in the process of taking new bids for projects that have not yet gotten under way.

Giuliani criticized the set-aside policy using the rhetoric of fiscal restraint that New Yorkers have come to know so well. The three million dollars in revenue lost last year as a result of the policy, however, is a pittance in a city that currently faces a two billion dollar budget deficit. More revealing is the mayor’s statement that he wants the city’s contract system to be “ethnic, race, religious, gender and sexual orientation-neutral.”

Giuliani’s recent rhetoric has heartened his conservative supporters, who had suspected he was secretly one of them. Though he twice ran for mayor as a moderate Republican, he has occasionally adopted since taking office in January a notably hard-line stance on a range of social issues. He repeatedly stresses self-reliance as the antidote to the culture of dependence fostered by a runaway welfare state. He is going ahead with his “race-neutral” plan to lay off 15,000 city employees, despite strong criticism from black and Hispanic legislators who fear that their constituents will be disproportionately affected. And he has said that the role of government should be far less expansive than has been the norm in New York City.

But there is a dark side to Giuliani and his politics that is as discouraging as the above policies are promising. During this summer’s Gay Pride festivities, the mayor set a dangerous precedent by refusing to prevent militant homosexuals from staging an illegal parade. He has also not spoken out against the Board of Education’s latest proposed curriculum, a watered-down version of the infamous Rainbow Curriculum, which triggered last year’s parental revolt that toppled Schools Chancellor Joseph Fernandez.

Giuliani’s position on the hot issue of

illegal aliens is equally cause for concern. His chief of staff, David Klasfeld, wrote in a memo: “The Executive Order which advises City agencies not to report people to the Immigration and Naturalization Service is for the good of all New Yorkers. We need to encourage all people who live here to seek necessary medical attention, social service help, or to report a crime without fear that they will be reported to the INS.” This statement left the public wondering whether the mayor believes that breaking immigration laws is not a crime and that welfare benefits for illegal aliens are somehow “for the good of all New Yorkers.”

With mixed signals such as these, New Yorkers are left wondering: “Will the real Giuliani please stand up?”

—Richard Irving

PATTI DAVIS, Reagan’s little girl whose nude body graced the cover of the July *Playboy*, has finally settled down, gotten her act together—and written a novel about bondage. Yes, bondage. And it’s titled, well, *Bondage*. Discussing her book on the NBC *Today* show with interviewer Katie Couric, who noted that it’s about people “totally out of control,” Davis explained that she wrote this novel because she’s always wanted to write about—get this!—“trust within the context of a relationship.” Why? To examine: “What if that trust was so extreme, how far would someone go?”

Davis says her theory is as follows: “That if you could trust someone that much to get into that kind of sexual exploration, in this case bondage, that it would probably be the most erotic experience in the world—rather than the danger being the enticement, that actually that [kind of total] trust would be.” She admits, however, that one of her characters does “get involved” with another “who’s a bit more dangerous than those of us [?] would like.”

Why write about *bondage*? Well, Davis says she wanted to write a story about “dangerous people” because they’re “fascinating and very attractive and they’re out there”—which, indeed, they are. I mean, just check the nearest mirror, Ms. Davis.

But, says Davis defensively, the character who goes too far doesn’t do only bad things. No, he teaches the female character “a lot” about herself. Such as? Well, he “dismantle[s] her defense system” and gives her the “best sex” she’s

ever had.

What about the “field research” Davis did for this novel? Not to worry, says Davis demurely: “Oh, I have not been tied up. I’ve never trusted anyone that much, actually, which is part of the reason this story was created. I think every novelist starts out with a ‘What if’ question, and one of mine was: What kind of person would it take for me to go, ‘Okay, I’ll do *anything* with you?’” The answer is, of course, a simple one: *A crazy person!*

In any event, for field research, Davis says she “picked the brain” of “a professional dominatrix”—which, if you *must* write about this kind of sexual perversion, is preferable to an *amateur* dominatrix. What she learned “confirmed” what she had suspected: that people within “the context of a relationship” (there’s that euphemism again) feel “very self-conscious about bringing their fantasies and deep, darkest desires into the relationship, so they go to someone like her [the professional dominatrix] who doesn’t have any judgment.”

OK. I understand. I mean, who wants to go to a *judgmental* dominatrix, professional or amateur? This would obviously take all the fun out of being tortured, right? Likewise, one sympathizes with those sickos who are reticent to reveal their “darkest desires,” their preference for sexual perversion.

Davis says, however, that seeking out a nonjudgmental professional dominatrix for tortured sex doesn’t actually “bode well for a relationship.” She thinks that “true intimacy” means “to share all of that stuff with your partner.” But, *but*, says Davis, “We live in a society that’s not OK with that.”

Society is to blame for weirdos going to sex-torturers? Yep, that’s what Davis says, with—if you’ll pardon the expression—a straight face. The problem is this: “There is a whole sort of sexual underground because of the judgmentalism that exists in this society.”

Davis says that having exhausted her “treasure chest” of family memories, she is now in “a whole other phase” of her writing. Indeed. She says that in her novel there are two women who almost become lovers but don’t because of “sort of echoes in their heads of: So, what does this mean? What category am I gonna . . .”

Then, calmly, Davis “outs” herself, revealing, it seems, that she is a lesbian or bisexual, something her interviewer

ignores completely. Davis says: "See, I don't believe love should be that way. *I don't think love should be gender-specific* [emphasis mine]." About which Katie Couric says *nothing*! She simply asks another unrelated question!

What is her relationship now with her parents, the Reagans? Well, "whatever it is, is OK," says Davis, sounding like the 12-step nerd-nurturer Stewart Smalley who satirizes modern psychology on *Saturday Night Live*. But she doesn't discuss her work with her parents because "it's a huge button" that she doesn't push anymore like she was once eager to do.

So, Patti Davis's new novel *Bondage* features two almost-lesbos who have "sort of echoes in their heads." No surprise here. Because, you see, heads that have "sort of echoes" in them are sort of empty, not unlike the head of the author of this book.

—John Lofton

THOUGH THE CRIME BILL just passed by Congress toughens federal sentencing provisions and makes more federal crimes subject to the death penalty, it is irrelevant to people longing for safer streets and neighborhoods. Also largely irrelevant is the proposal to make more offenses federal crimes. There may be more federal crimes, but there won't be more federal courts, so most of those offenses will continue to be dealt with as state crimes.

Even the provisions that may be relevant—more police officers and grants for prison construction and operation—may not be the unqualified boon they appear to be at first glance. State and local governments will have to find money for expensive matching programs—and in a few years they will have to find even more money, because they will be paying the full cost. There is also big money in the bill for what are termed "community crime prevention programs." In plain language, that means pork-barrel projects, with grants and federal jobs that members of Congress can use to buy votes.

And then there is the Racial Justice Act. The Racial Justice Act was passed by the House but omitted from the final crime bill. It would have allowed death-row inmates to use statistics to challenge a state or federal death sentence as racially biased. The government would then have had to prove a negative—that there was no discrimination based on

race. The Congressional Black Caucus agreed to drop the Racial Justice Act from the crime bill after President Clinton promised to use executive orders to achieve the same result on the federal level. Senate Republicans had promised to filibuster the crime bill to death if the provision was in it.

The Racial Justice Act might more accurately have been termed the Racial Injustice Act, since it was about neither justice nor race; instead, it was a back-door approach to outlawing the death penalty. Although ostensibly aimed at benefiting blacks sentenced to death, the act would equally have opened the door to claims by whites. It would have made it almost impossible to carry out any death sentence anywhere. It would have negated the principle that every case, and the persons involved, be considered on its own individual merits. Besides, even the Devil can quote statistics (like Scripture) to his purpose.

Blacks make up a higher percentage of death-row inmates than they do of the general population. However, Nancy E. Roman of the *Washington Times*, who made an extensive examination of studies on the death penalty and race, found a wide body of research demonstrating that racial bias does not account for the disparity between the percentages of whites and blacks arrested, imprisoned, or sentenced to death. Moreover, a study by Stephen Klein of the Rand Corporation found that there is no disparity between those sentenced to death for killing whites and those sentenced for killing blacks, when factors such as severity and number of crimes committed are considered. Others, including Patrick Lanagan of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, have published studies with results similar to Mr. Klein's.

Nonetheless, there have been occasional studies that conclude that racial discrimination does exist in sentencing. One—the conclusions of which have since been challenged—was used unsuccessfully in an appeal to the Supreme Court in 1987. Opponents of capital punishment will doubtless commission others.

Although promoters of the act concentrated their fire on perceived discrimination against blacks, whites, who make up about 58 percent of death-row inmates, might well have made even more use of it to challenge their sentences. For instance, a white death-row inmate could have cited statistics to

claim that a smaller percentage of blacks convicted of the same crime in the same community under the same circumstances have been sentenced to death. As passed by the House, the Racial Justice Act would also have covered all of the more than 2,500 inmates already awaiting execution. This means that appeals could have tied up courts for years to come.

Joseph Katz, a professor of statistics at Georgia State University, objects to defining fairness in sentencing as the percentage of whites and blacks sentenced to death. Mr. Katz and others have found that death sentences have more to do with the types of crimes committed and the circumstances under which they were committed than with the race of the criminal or victim. Mr. Katz has pointed out that, under the standards of the Racial Justice Act, the fairest way to correct the perceived inequity in the system would be to sentence to death *more blacks who kill blacks*, since statistically they receive the death penalty least of all murderers.

Would the nation be better off with or without any federal crime bill at all? It's arguable. What the nation does *not* need, however, is a criminal justice system based on quotas.

—Dorman E. Cordell

THE FLINTSTONES is the latest example of Hollywood's infatuation with cartoon characters. Because a cartoon is not reality, one is expected to suspend belief and therefore judgment. Ever since Mickey Mouse became a culture-hero of the young, it has been hard to know where fantasy ends and reality begins. Neither is a cartoon myth, and for that reason it does not qualify as fantasy in a literary sense. Cartoons are projections of our fancies that caricature reality. It is hard to react critically to a cartoon, because people will say: "Loosen up, it's just a cartoon."

There are many cheap thrills in the *Flintstones*, made possible by an expensive set production with the Spielberg talent for visual effects. Animals that do the work of machines and stone houses with ingenious utensils captivate for a few minutes, but then the story begins and one becomes mired in a silly plot-line that is made even worse by the blandness of the characters.

The tale starts with Fred, played by John Goodman, coming home to

Wilma, played by Elizabeth Perkins, who is too attractive and sexy for the role. A fight ensues when Wilma confronts Fred over the disappearance of their savings. Fred, hostile at first, wilts under a little pressure from Wilma and reveals that he has given their savings to the Rubbles so they can adopt a child. Wilma forgives Fred because of his sacrifice for their friends. Barney vows to repay Fred for his kindness.

There is no need to rehash a plot in which Barney engineers Fred's promotion to the corporate headquarters, where he is made the pawn of an embezzlement scheme that requires him to fire Barney. The friendship between the Flintstones and the Rubbles deteriorates. Money and status turn the heads of Fred and Wilma, while the Rubbles languish without job and home.

Sensitive Wilma in the end saves Fred from his ego and from a lynch mob. At the finale, Fred awakens to his real treasure, his family. "I was always the richest man in the world. I just never knew it." All the corporate types in the film are presented in populist cliché, as greedy and conniving enemies of the working man.

In the original *Flintstones*, and in the *Honeymooners* on which the characters of Fred and Wilma were based, there was real tension. Fred and Wilma fought hard, Wilma with sarcasm and stoic resolve and Fred with fits of temper and verbal bluster. The moral to their story was that family members may discharge the animus of struggle that fuels frustration and regret without loss of affection. In this new movie, there is no demonic dimension to Fred the man. Wilma always cows him after his initial salvo. Fred is easily reduced to simpering sentimentality. In one scene, he cries buckets on hearing a corny poem written in tribute to him by Barney.

What John Goodman represents is not Fred but his own persona of bovine affability that Americans have come to expect in his performances. Barney, on the other hand, is simply Mr. Nice Guy. The quality that made Ed Norton in the *Honeymooners* and Barney in the *Flintstones* interesting was the naive complexity of authentic fools, always bungling but sometimes wise in spite of themselves. This new version of Barney is a Mr. Rogers clone. What the film implies is that these are the acceptable types of men. Choose between the saccharine niceness of Mr. Rogers and the

laughable machismo of Fred Flintstone.

America wants nothing to fear from its men, lest the imperious man rear his head and regain control of his family, his community, and the reins of government. The women of the new *Flintstones* are no threat either. Wilma drifts along barely conscious, and Betty, played by Rosie O'Donnell, is hardly noticeable except for her chipmunk laugh.

John Goodman, in an interview with Patrick Stoner, said that the *Flintstones'* appeal results from the nostalgia of a 50's mindset. Actually, the movie is a 90's attempt to describe a simplicity of gender relations that we find quaint in a funny sort of way, because we are watching from the standpoint of the liberating sophistication of the 1960's. We want to make the Flintstones and the Rubbles as shallow as possible, for to think of them otherwise might lead us to some conclusions about the sexes that would disturb our sleep. There are no real men and women in the *Flintstones*. The lesson is that, if we all give our natural goodness a chance to express itself, we can all become nice human beings.

—Gary F. Vejvoda

APRIL will be long over when you read this, but what an amazingly fecund 30 days it was this year. April was "Child Abuse Prevention Month." The first week of April was "Read Aloud Week," the last week was National Library Week, the 28th was "Take Our Daughters to Work Day" (which was very hard on us, being the parents of four boys), and the last day was the beginning of "Clean Air Week." What an embarrassment of riches! I do not want to know who comes up with all of these important events, but it is probably someone salaried by the taxpayers.

But I can tell you one thing: I absolutely refused to read aloud to my kids that week. And another thing: I prevent their abuse not just one month of the year, but all 12, by keeping them out of the public school system. I also censor what they check out at the library. And I think I will smoke a cigarette sometime during Clean Air Week, even though I gave it up 17 years ago.

What kind of stupidity is all this "declared" hogwash? Do people really pay attention to this rot and read aloud to their kids simply because the paper reported on this fatuous nonsense? Were we supposed to be extra vigilant in April

and report our neighbors when we saw them swat little Johnnie (or Joannie), whom we consider to be a brat and well-deserving of that and more?

Maybe the "abuse" we were really meant to prevent in April was that of our "inner child." (These *are* ambiguous times.) Maybe April was the month that we were supposed to go out and buy our "child" that new dress the evil parent promised she would buy but never did, thus scarring us for life (especially if one was a male child!).

As if all of the above was not enough, I discovered that another high holy day falls in April. No, not Easter. I am talking about Earth Day. But we here in Colorado, the State of Hate, don't just celebrate Earth Day. We have Earth Week. Aside from a lot of "acoustic" singers (as opposed to what, the deaf signing to "We are the World"?), and the obligatory tree planting, I think my favorite was a "dumpster dive"; people were asked to rummage through a dumpster "to remove all things that can be recycled." (Black tie required.)

In the Earth Week '94 supplement to the paper, we were also given tips for recycling. A very timely one was "Document Destruction: for confidential documents." So we can see that our esteemed President and his main squeeze were just being "green" about all that boring Whitewater stuff. Shredding is de rigueur and so very sensitive to our Mother. It turns thousands of sheets of damning evidence into millions of innocent little worms of paper. The ultimate in recycling would be to dye them in lovely earth tones and sell them for Easter baskets next year. Who knows, you might be the first on your block to get a peek at the Vince Foster files, buried oh so carefully under carob bunnies, free range eggs, and rice syrup candies. Happy Easter!

With summer coming so quickly on the heels of Earth Month, there were also important ads about the evils of sending grass clippings to the landfill, where they supposedly take up 17 percent of the space. Not organic enough, I guess. No, if you are to be regarded as anything other than an insensitive consumer of the goddess Gaia, you must now *mulch*. Mulching involves spending up to one thousand dollars on a new mower. "We are gradually getting better and better at recycling, but we need to encourage people to use less [sic] of the recyclable products in the first place,"

said a local "environmental education specialist." This is an idea called "pre-cycling," which I thought meant dreaming about going on a bike ride. Guess not.

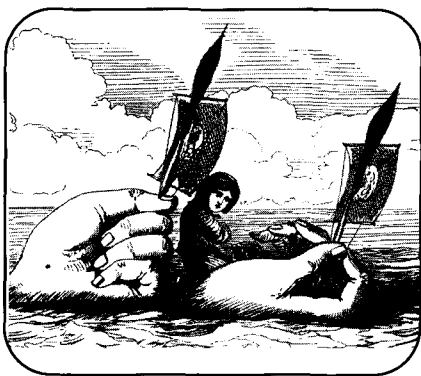
It really bugs me to have other people "encourage" me. Nothing is stopping these people from never using anything ever again. Unfortunately, there isn't much stopping them from trying to stop me from using things either, which is their real goal. And that does not "encourage" me one little bit.

Another goal is deep indoctrination, which can only be achieved in cults or public schools, both of which are in-

creasingly indistinguishable from one another. "In 1970," states Mr. Earth Day, Gaylord Nelson, "no environmental education was going on in the grade schools and high schools in America. Now, it is taught from kindergarden through high school across the country. Now there are literally thousands of schools with environmental teaching going on." Of course, the fact that our children are increasingly illiterate and morally stupefied is of no relevance to Mr. Earth Day. By goddess, as long as they can recycle and buy organic, what else really matters?

As long as enough people feel "encouraged" by such social engineering, we will continue down the broad path to destruction. The destruction of freedom and intelligent public discourse. The destruction of our children's minds. The destruction of our future. It will be a path littered with good intentions and old bagging lawn mowers.

—M. Laurel Van Maren



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OBITER DICTA: Poet, novelist, and essayist Wendell Berry and economist, philosopher, and historian Murray N. Rothbard are the recipients of the 1994 Ingersoll Prizes. Berry will receive the T.S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing; Rothbard, the Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters. The awards, each of which carries a cash prize of \$20,000, recognize writers of abiding importance whose works affirm the fundamental principles of Western civilization.

Wendell E. Berry was born in Henry County, Kentucky, in 1934. He was educated at the University of Kentucky. His writings include: the novels *Nathan Coulter* (1962), *A Place on Earth* (1967), *The Memory of Old Jack* (1974), and *Watch With Me* (1994); the volume of short stories *The Wild Birds* (1986); the volumes of poetry *The Broken Ground* (1964), *Farming: A Handbook* (1970), *The Country of Marriage* (1973), *Collected Poems* (1985), *Sabbaths* (1987), and *Entries* (1994); and the essay collections *The Long-Legged Horse* (1969), *The Unforeseen Wilderness* (1971), *The Unsettling of America* (1977), *Home Economics* (1987), and *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community* (1993). A defender of rural life in an age of urbanization, Berry is among the greatest of agrarian writers who prefer to do their prophesying in the wilderness. He continues to make his home in Kentucky.

Murray N. Rothbard was born in 1926

in New York City, where he continues to reside for part of the year. He received the A.B., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in economics from Columbia University and studied for more than ten years under Ludwig von Mises at New York University. A passionate defender of freedom, Rothbard is currently S.J. Hall Distinguished Professor of Economics at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and vice president for academic affairs at the Ludwig von Mises Institute for Austrian Economics at Auburn University and in Burlingame, California. He is the editor of both the annual *Review of Austrian Economics* and the semiannual *Journal of Libertarian Studies* and has vastly expanded the scholarship on Austrian economics, history, philosophy, ethics, and political theory with such books as: *The Panic of 1819: Reactions and Policies* (1962), *Man, Economy, and State: A Treatise on Economic Principles* (two volumes, 1962 and 1994), *The Essential Von Mises* (1973), *Foundations of Modern Austrian Economics* (coauthored with E. Dolan, 1976), and *Ludwig von Mises: Scholar, Creator, Hero* (1988). From the very beginning, Rothbard has been an indefatigable gadfly in his efforts to arouse the American people to defend their political and economic liberties.

The Ingersoll Foundation is the philanthropic division of Ingersoll Milling Machine Company of Rockford, Illinois. The Rockford Institute administers the prizes. Past recipients of the T.S. Eliot Award are Fred Chappell (1993), Muriel Spark (1992), Mario Vargas Llosa (1991), Charles Causley (1990), George Garrett (1989), Walker Percy (1988), Octavio Paz (1987), V.S. Naipaul (1986), Eugène Ionesco (1985), Anthony Powell (1984), and Jorge Luis Borges (1983). Eugène Genovese (1993), Walter Burkert (1992), John Lukacs (1991), Forrest McDonald (1990), Edward O. Wilson (1989), Edward Shils (1988), Josef Pieper (1987), Andrew Lytle (1986), Robert Nisbet (1985), Russell Kirk (1984), and James Burnham (1983) are the previous recipients of the Richard M. Weaver Award.

* * *

The following stores in the Seattle area sell *Chronicles*: University Book Store, 990 102nd Avenue N.E. in Bellevue; Barnes & Noble Superstore, 15600 N.E. 8th Street in Bellevue; and Alfi News, 1717 North 45th Street in Seattle.

Principalities & Powers

by Samuel Francis

Myths to Kill For

"I've got a little list, I've got a little list," twitters the Lord High Executioner in a famous line of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*, and indeed these days who doesn't have one? Abortion protester Paul Hill seems to have had a little list of his own, and early in the morning on July 28 of this year he leveled a shotgun at two of those whose names led all the rest and dispatched them to that great abortion clinic in the sky (or perhaps it's located in a rather lower altitude). For the next several days, the official pro-life movement spent its time condemning, distancing itself from, and expressing repugnance for what Mr. Hill had done, even as the supporters of "choice," the preposterous euphemism for abortion that everyone now uses, insisted that the murders with which Mr. Hill was immediately charged, if they did not have the explicit support of the pro-life movement, at least grew logically out of the pro-lifers' own rhetoric and ideology. Whether they did or not is a question not to be dismissed as derisively or as speedily as most respectable pro-lifers habitually do, but whatever the answer to the question, it's clear that Mr. Hill is not alone in having come to the conclusion that there is a time to get down to the business of ridding the planet of those society offenders who might well be underground and who never, never, never would be missed.

A few years ago a friend of mine told me there are only two political movements in the country for which he had any respect—the animal rights and anti-abortion movements—because these are the only ones composed of persons who are willing to go to jail for their beliefs. Perhaps this tells you more about the kind of people I have for friends than anything else, but he had a point that many on the right seem to find incomprehensible. It is all very well to canvass the neighborhood for votes, raise money by direct mail, publish magazines, host talk shows, and write books and newspaper columns, but unless you're willing to suffer for the cause in which you are enlisted, it will never get very far.

Willingness to suffer, of course, does

not necessarily mean willingness to die, to be maimed for life, or to lose your job and family, but it does mean willingness to endure rather more unpleasantness than most on the political right these days seem prepared to accept, and it implies also a willingness to inflict some suffering upon one's adversaries. It is characteristic of the right that its adherents tend to be well-off and comfortable, and any political action they endorse or involve themselves in must not threaten that comfort or even suggest that there may be times when living in affluent vegetation and voting Republican are not enough to preserve a way of life, a nation, or a civilization that consists of something more than fiscal restraint and cakes on the griddle. Anti-abortion crackpots like Mr. Hill are merely among the first to reflect on such matters, but the time may soon be coming when others on the political right in this country need to ponder the same matters: When, if ever, is political violence justified? What other kinds of extralegal action might also be justified or necessary? And—perhaps for many on the right the most unthinkable thought of all—just how close are we in the United States to such a time?

For the left, such issues have never been a big deal. The left appeared in history armed with a formal political theory that wrapped itself in absolute natural rights (later replaced by the dialectic of history and the myth of progress) and the myth of the consensual basis of political legitimacy. If a political order violated what the left took to be such "rights," if it behaved in a manner that did not respect the mechanisms of political consent, or even if it enlisted itself on the wrong side of history, woe betide it and its partisans. Thus, the notorious "double standard" of the left, by which it ignores or applauds the most brutal repression and the most vicious violence committed by its pals even as it giggles in glee over the punishment of its enemies on the right, is not really a logical contradiction.

A few years ago, when neo-Nazi thugs were ripping up the streets of a newly unified Germany, the German government talked seriously of banning even moderate right-wing groups there, and

the Progressive element amongst us clapped and cheered at the prospect, even though the neo-Nazis had done virtually nothing that both the European and American New Left in the 1960's had not also done. The neo-Nazis, you see, were simply on the wrong side of history and had no rights, while the New Leftists over whom the progressive types gibbered and drooled were history's good guys. The same view is evident in the wretched and mendacious movie *Mississippi Burning*, where Southern racists murder three "civil rights workers" and are finally brought to justice by FBI agents who literally threaten to torture, castrate, and burn to death citizens who had nothing to do with the killings. The assault on the Southern social order by organized armies of "civil rights workers" is never considered an act of violence, even though at the time almost all such activists saw themselves as the agents of an openly revolutionary and socially destructive mission.

For Christians, of course, the legitimation of violence for political purposes is quite a bit more challenging a problem, and that is the formal reason so many pro-life activists leaped to condemn Mr. Hill's actions. Nevertheless, the Christian apologetic for attacking or even killing those who practice abortion does have a foundation in logic. As Donald Spitz of Operation Rescue Chesapeake says, "If there was a sniper in the schoolyard sniping off children one by one and the only way you could stop him was by stopping that sniper . . . you would stop that sniper."

To that argument, mainstream pro-lifers voice several different responses, namely: a) Christians may not kill or use violence (but Christians do endorse violence in the form of self-defense, capital punishment, and just war); b) using violence against abortionists and their clinics is counterproductive, at least as long as lawful and nonviolent political and legal action is possible (though when liberals used the "counterproductive" argument against the New Left in the 1960's, they were laughed to scorn by outraged conservatives who demanded a stronger response and a more fundamental objection to political violence); and c) perhaps the most compelling ar-

gument, expressed to me by Christian activist John Lofton, that if the model of Christian activism is that of the early Church, it ought to be clear that neither Jesus nor the Apostles nor any of the Church Fathers ever advocated violence against the pagan Roman state, nor did any Christian ever engage in violence; the point back then was not to stop abortion, prevent the worship of pagan gods, or improve the sexual morals of the Romans but to convert the Empire, and once that conversion was accomplished, these Christian theological and ethical goals fell into place. In this view, snuffing abortionists is simply a distraction from the main business of Christians, which is to work for the Christianization of mankind.

Of course, the irony of political violence nowadays is precisely that it is self-professed Christians in the pro-life movement who commit it—not neo-Nazis, Klansmen, tax resisters, gun nuts, or defenders of smokers' rights who, in the paranoid mythology of the left, might be expected to resort to guns more quickly. Aside from various "hate crimes," most of which, even when real, appear to be largely spontaneous outbursts rather than acts of principled and premeditated terrorism, none of the more desperate factions of the right seems to be much of a threat to anyone. Only twice in this country since World War II has any part of what might be considered the "right" shown any inclination to resort to tossing brickbats: during the civil rights war in the South—when a handful of people were shot or killed by the Klan and a few years later when antibusing activists actually set fire to some school buses and on one occasion chased Teddy Kennedy—and during the early 1980's, when a gang of neo-Nazis killed a Jewish talk-show host in Colorado, held up an armored car, and committed divers and sundry acts of useless mayhem. Except for occasional organized nuts and justly outraged parents of bused children, the right in the United States has mainly been a harmless bunch. Given what the right's enemies have done to the country over the years, this really does not speak well of the right.

The peacefulness of the American right is no less ironic than the readiness of some pro-life Christians to take up arms, and it ought to be the other way around, especially since the right's professed heroes and models include such

trigger-happy warriors as the Minutemen of the War for Independence and the Confederates of the Second War for Independence. Yet even the "right-wing terrorist" group of the 1960's that called itself the "Minutemen" never did very much except stash arms against *der Tag* and issue "communiqués" about how the commies they believed were running the Federal Reserve System had just better watch out. Even the Ku Kluxers mainly restricted themselves to holding big barbecues beneath the fiery cross and listening to uplifting lectures on race relations that were probably more interesting than the revivalist sermons they more commonly attended.

Of course, there are all sorts of reasons for the general harmlessness of the American right, and the ineffectuality of its supposedly violent wing merely reflects the same characteristic of its more mainstream political side. The main reason, I believe, for the absence of any serious rightist violence in this country is quite simply that there is no legitimizing myth of violence for the right here. The dominant myths are those of the left—of the consent of the governed, of natural rights, of progress. Any movement that invokes these myths to justify a course of violence is, virtually by definition, part of the left, and any movement that takes up arms to challenge or violate these normative American myths soon finds that it can't think of any good reasons to justify itself. It cannot justify itself because its leaders and members have been raised and educated only in the myths of the left, and the myths of the left can never serve to justify a movement that seeks to challenge what the left demands.

Thus, when the above-mentioned right-wing terrorists of the "Silent Brotherhood" were brought to trial for their murder of talk-show host Alan Berg in 1984, their defense was that they simply didn't do it, and it never occurred to the defendants or their supporters to try to justify the killing, as genuine terrorists always do. In order to mount a case that killing Mr. Berg was justified, the killers would have had to reach for ideas, values, and concepts that simply are not on the American intellectual shelf and were probably beyond the mental grasp of most Silent Brothers anyway. Such concepts are readily available in Russia, certain countries of Europe, and Latin America, but here they just don't exist, and you'd be better off warning about

invasions from the moons of Saturn than trying to explain those ideas in public, let alone using them to justify murder.

But of course the situation in this country today is such, or is quickly becoming such, that those ideas—drawn from Georges Sorel, Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Maurras, among others—might soon find a more receptive audience. If the ineffectuality of the mainstream political right has accomplished anything, it has shown that Republicans cannot and will not do what they say they will do if elected. One reason for the emergence of anti-abortion violence in the last couple of years is precisely that after more than a decade of two right-leaning and professedly pro-life Republican Presidents, each of whom appointed new Justices to the Supreme Court, the pro-life cause was no closer to victory than before and perhaps even farther from it, and even several of the Justices appointed by Reagan and Bush voted against overturning *Roe v. Wade* when they had the chance. If you believe, as pro-lifers do, that the fetus is a human being and that destroying it is an act of murder, then it is clear that the peaceful and lawful political and legal process has failed, and the logic of resorting to the killing of those who professionally commit such murders becomes more and more compelling.

But that logic is no more compelling than when it is applied to many of the other commitments the Republican right has regurgitated repeatedly in the past 20 years—to lower taxes, to reduce the size and power of the state, to enforce laws against dangerous criminals, to protect Americans against foreign enemies, to resist the orchestrated destruction of American civilization by publicly funded schools and cultural authorities, to protect the country against the invasion of immigration, to abolish or radically reform and reduce the welfare state, to redress the injustice of the civil rights laws, and on and on. Not one of these commitments has been kept, and today it is hard to find a Republican politician or a conservative pundit who even understands them, though what they promised action against amounts to an onslaught on the American way of life at least as serious and lethal as any invasion by foreign armies.

Violence as a political instrument is a desperate measure, but it is not so desperate that it is unprecedented or unjustifiable. The (original) Minutemen and

the Confederates who took up arms against what they perceived as tyranny understood that it is force, and not discussion or votes or laws, that ultimately determines the courses in which political power runs, and the risk they assumed when they took up arms was no larger than what they would have faced had they remained peaceful.

What we face today is far more re-

pressive, far more dangerous, and far more entrenched than the oppressors of the late 18th and mid-19th centuries, and we have far more reason to take up arms against the oppressor and its agents than they did. There can be little question today about the ethical legitimacy of using violence in defense of a way of life that the rulers of the nation do nothing to protect and much to destroy and

about which they no longer care or can be made to care through the normal processes of politics and law. It is probably counterproductive now to start shooting federal judges, bureaucrats, and politicians who lie their way from one election to another, but it's certainly not too early to start making a little list and letting them know who's on it.

CORCYRA MEMORANDA

"Words changed their ordinary meanings and were construed in new senses. Reckless daring passed for the courage of a loyal partisan, far-sighted hesitation was the excuse of a coward, moderation was the pretext of the unmanly, the power to see all sides of a question was complete inability to act. Impulsive rashness was held the mark of a man, caution in conspiracy was a specious excuse for avoiding action."

—Thucydides

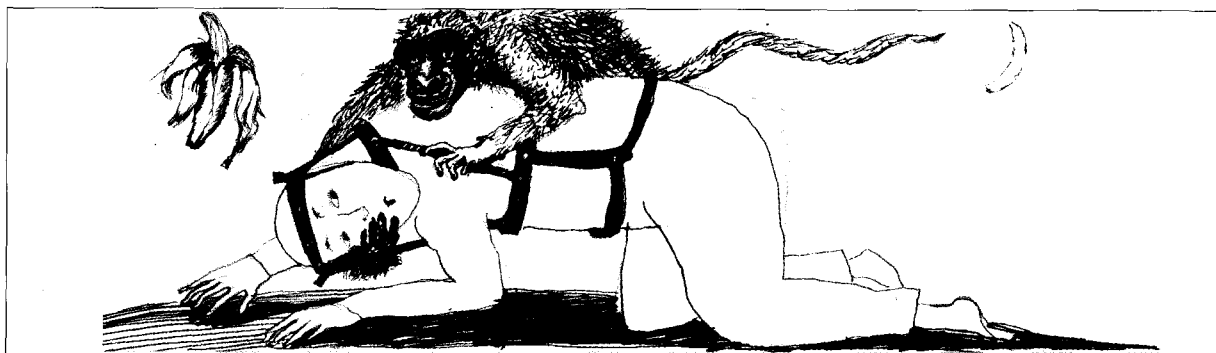
Homophobe: a nonce-word used to designate a person who disagrees with the homosexual rights agenda. According to folk etymology, the "word" would be a compound of Latin *homo* (man) and Greek *phobos* (fear), but who in the world is afraid of Virginia Woolf? "Homophobe" is constructed on the analogy of "homosexual," which is interpreted by the uneducated as "having sexual feelings toward men." This misinterpretation gives rise to the common pairing of "lesbians and homosexuals" on the assumption that homosexual ought properly to be applied to males.

All of this is nonsense, of course. "Homosexual" is an unnecessary and illiterate hybrid of Greek *homos* (like or same) and Latin *sexus* (gender) and given the more or less impossible meaning of "having sexual feelings toward a member of the same sex." According to the OED supplement, this "irregular" formation entered English in 1892 by way of a translation of Kraft-Ebbing. As for "homophobe," if this coinage had any meaning whatsoever, it would refer to persons with an inordinate fear of persons like themselves.

Even if one wished to reinterpret the first element of "homosexual" as a reference to Latin *homo*, it would be necessary to grapple with the unpleasant fact that *homo* does not mean, as any schoolboy knows, man as opposed to woman (in Latin that meaning is covered by *vir*), but man as opposed to beast. On this understanding, among homosexuals would be included everyone but bestialists and fetishists.

The potted etymologies and strained interpretations ("daffynitions" in the language of humor magazines) of all words relating to same-sex eroticism are a perfect illustration of the rule that obfuscatory language is the product of dishonesty. English has perfectly good words to describe the acts of males who confound the excretory and the reproductive systems, but "buggery" and "sodomy" are too graphic, too honest; they remind the hearer all too well of the facts of the matter. Recourse is had to the dog Latin variations on "the love that dare not speak its name." If intimate matters or sexual identity must be discussed at all in public, some colorless term like "homophilia" or "homocroticism" might be adopted out of politeness to homophiles and a general sense of decorum. But words like "gay" and "homophobe"—so many verbal bullets being shot at "straight society"—only invite contempt.

—Thomas Fleming



Anna Myeck-Wodecki

Why Monkeys Get Fat in Banana Republics

by Thomas Fleming

Much to no one's surprise, Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon was elected President of Mexico this past August. There were the usual cries of foul both from the opposition parties and from citizens' groups monitoring the election: insufficient ballots were provided to certain polling places where the opposition was strong, so it was said, and government employees were brought in early to exhaust the supply; secrecy was inadequate, a serious problem in a country where a majority of the population receives its income from the government. There were, in addition, the usual reports of intimidation and ballot-stuffing, but these were mild and scattered cases that did little to dim the luster of the ruling party's victory. Zedillo's handsome lead in the preelection polls was confirmed by the results, and that was enough to convince the *New York Times* that the election—"the cleanest on record for Mexico"—was another step in that nation's progress toward North American democracy.

A prudent man with any knowledge of politics would conclude just the opposite. That a party in power for 65 years, and one so manifestly corrupt as the Institutional Revolutionary Party, should win another landslide victory is evidence of nothing more than the plain fact that most Mexicans are still not ready for self-government. Mexico is, as much as the old U.S.S.R., a party state, and the fact that there are opposition parties means exactly nothing. In communist Poland, the communists tolerated, even encouraged opposition parties because—as one of the leaders of the Liberals once told me—such parties were useful window-dressing for the regime. But, like dummies in the window, they could only wear the uniform or strike the proper attitude. They could do nothing.

What a curious name, the Institutional Revolutionary Party. On the logic of the cliché that a successful revolution is betrayed the moment it succeeds, one would have thought

that to institutionalize a revolution was to betray it. Revolutions are meant to break up the logjam of decadent institutions, and the moment that revolutionary leaders begin to consolidate their principles, they have created a regime as corrupt or even more corrupt than its predecessor. Mao knew this very well and called in the unlettered students and peasants to wage unceasing war upon the intellectuals and technocrats who enjoyed all their privileges in the name of the people. (Zedillo was trained in economics at Yale.) As frightening and destructive as Mao's cultural revolution must have been, it was a very sensible, even necessary device to prevent the revolution from becoming institutionalized.

The enemies of the revolution always come from the ranks of its leadership. Robespierre knew this, in putting down the only slightly less sanguinary Girondists, who seemed more disposed to exercise power by governing than by stoking the flames of revolution; so did Hitler, when he rounded up Ernst Röhm and his squads of jackbooted Ganymedes. (Hitler's puritanism obviously contributed to his distaste for Röhm, but the effect of his coup was to eliminate an entrenched source of potential opposition.)

Stalin, among the most Machiavellian of modern politicians, systematically executed or interned nearly every major Bolshevik leader he could lay his hands on. Like Hitler, Stalin had complex motives; his personal hatred of Jews and foreigners obviously rang a bell with the Russian people, and it would be a mistake to minimize Stalin's (or Hitler's) megalomania. But the effect of the purges and the terrors was to delay the bureaucratic ossification that set in after Stalin's death. I remember reading a Russian defector's explanation of Gorbachev. Here was a man who had failed at everything, but on the strength of personal charm and the party's old-boy network he made his way to the top, where he proceeded to bungle the

entire Soviet Empire. In making death or imprisonment the penalty for incompetence and corruption, Stalin got rid of the Gorbachevs before they could do much damage.

How much of Stalin's persecution was policy, how much instinct or mere malice, remains a subject of debate among pathologists who continue to study Soviet history. Khrushchev apparently thought Stalin knew what he was doing, and in his secret speech he observed that:

Stalin was convinced that it was necessary for the defense of the interests of the working class against the plotting of the enemies and against the attack of the imperialist camp . . . We cannot say that these were the deeds of a giddy despot. He considered that this should be done in the interests of the Party, of the working masses, in the name of defense of the revolution's gains. In this lies the whole tragedy.

Eugenio Corti, in his great play *The Trial and Death of Stalin*, has Stalin explain to his successors that the only way he had of keeping the revolution pure was to terrorize not just the nation but the party, including its most loyal members. "What did you want," he asks Khrushchev and Molotov, "to be Antichrists to everyone else but Christians among ourselves?"

The logic of Stalin is only the anti-Christian counterpart to the reasoning that all Republicans since Machiavelli have employed. Thomas Jefferson knew, from the very beginning, that America needed a little revolution now and then, and instead of panicking at Shays' Rebellion, he was pleased that the ruling class was getting a gentle reminder of the source from which their power derived. Jefferson was the least blood-thirsty of the American Founders, but it was he who proclaimed—in a sentence I never tire of quoting—that "the tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time by the blood of patriots and tyrants."

Americans like to say that the events of 1776 did not lead to anything like a revolution, that our ancestors were merely seceding from the authority of the Crown. In one sense this is clearly the case. Despite the presence of crackpot foreigners like Lafayette and Paine, ours was no Jacobin revolution aimed at destroying the old world and making all things new. (Admittedly, the *Novus Ordo Seclorum* on the dollar bill is disquieting.) On the other hand, our ancestors—or at least the best of them—were equally determined not to reproduce the corrupt political system devised by Robert Walpole for the Hanoverian boors the British were (and are) pleased to call kings. The British system, for all its many virtues, was corruption through and through, and the king's ministers were able to control Parliament by the simple expedient of buying members and their votes. That this corruption allowed the emergence of such statesmen as the Pitts, Charles Fox, and Edmund Burke in no way palliates its viciousness. England and Scotland (even Ireland) had produced considerable statesmen in more honest times, and a less corrupt regime might have avoided the excesses of reform that ultimately destroyed the British character.

The American system of government was designed so as to preserve all the best qualities inherent in the English constitution, while purging it of the vices that polluted it. Unfortunately, as Jefferson knew all too well, republican government requires an honorable and vigilant nation. While the

many are content to go about their business and take little interest in the public affairs in which their stake can only be very small, the few can concentrate all their efforts on constructing the engines of exploitation and oppression: national banks, federal courts, transcontinental railroads, land giveaways, and what Eisenhower's speechwriters taught us to call the military-industrial complex.

The process of consolidation began in the Washington administration. The Federalists, whose leaders were originally good and honest men, were not slow to prove themselves the worthy ancestors of the Republicans, by cozying up to bankers and red-baiting their opponents, whom they described as rabble-rousing Jacobins. (Some of the mud they slung still clings to Jefferson's reputation.) Jefferson regarded the election of 1800 as a second revolution to restore the principles of the first.

***W* e live under a
revolutionary
regime that is
owned lock, stock, and barrel by a
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cards, boycott all the big corporations,
and vote for anyone but a Democrat
or Republican.**

The defeated Federalists, as Jefferson complained, soon joined the victorious party, where "under the pseudo-republican mask" they renewed their drive to power. The Jeffersonians themselves—and some would say their leader—soon institutionalized their own revolution, and the corrupt bargain that put John Quincy Adams—whose character is proof that greatness is not hereditary—in power invited the Jacksonian outburst that poured into Washington, only to prepare the way for that cunning rogue Martin Van Buren, who created the first formal party in America, and so it has gone in the endless see-saw described by Bob Whitaker in his book *A Plague on Both Your Houses*. Generation after generation of institution-busting and -rebuilding, until Franklin Roosevelt—the modern Walpole—created the un-American Empire, this time not with the king's money but with the people's.

Any hope that the Republican Party, conceived as it was in sin, might serve as a source of opposition ended with the nominations of Wilkie, Dewey, and Eisenhower, and since the 1930's America has been a two-party state in the same way that Italy has been a five- or six-party state and the Soviet Union a one-party state. Small wonder that the *New York Times* is sat-

ified with the results in Mexico, where victory goes to a candidate handpicked by the outgoing president and representing the party that pays most of the voters and controls the media, the schools, and the economy. If the PRI had two wings, called Democrats and Republicans, it would be a mirror image of our own *partitocrazia*.

For years Americans have been smug, looking down their noses at the Banana Republics of Central America, pointing our schoolmarmish fingers at apartheid in South Africa, excoriating the Chinese for refusing to tolerate a Woodstock revolution in Tiananmen Square, where the rioters' ultimate object was the right to wear jeans and drink Coke. But the time for smugness is gone. There is no insult or indignity we as a nation will not put up with so long as our rulers continue to bribe us with promises of "free" health care and added police protection. If there were any conservatives left in the Congress, one would have expected a filibuster against the mere idea of a federal crime bill. From whom do we need protection, if not from the feds? The idea that armed gangs of blacks are roaming the suburbs stealing Volvos and molesting pom-pom girls is a fiction created to justify the police state that is under construction. But what were the grounds of the failed conservative opposition? They wanted a federal crime bill, insisted the Minority Whip, just not this one. When the conservatives declare that big government is here to stay, what do they mean except that they have joined the institutionalized revolution and forfeited their right to be taken seriously—not just as conservatives but as any kind of political force.

Well, one of them will say, this is a democracy, and if you think you have a better plan, all you have to do is to get down into the marketplace of ideas and causes and sell your wares, but the failure of third parties proves that by and large the American people are satisfied with the two-party system, which allows the formation of broad coalitions and the alternation of parties . . . blah, blah, blah. This is the style of Stalinist pamphlets and public school civics texts.

Supposing one did form a third party, the obstacles con-

structed by the regime are enormous. The Democrat-Republicans have seen to it that ballot access is very limited in most of the 50 states, that tax dollars go to already existing political parties to strengthen their power. They own the government, which serves as paymaster to its corporate clients, the multinational corporations that survive on government contracts and monopolies, and to its individual dependents, both state and federal employees and the vast welfare class that they can use as voting blocs. They also own virtually all the big newspapers, the television networks, the movie studios, and the public schools. So many Americans have, however, dimly grasped these facts that fewer and fewer of us even bother to exercise the illusory privilege of the franchise. "Don't vote," goes my favorite bumper sticker, "It only encourages them." Every vote for an Establishment politician only feeds the federal monkey, which has sunk its claws deep into the backs of the American people, and the so-called leftists, who claim to be radical and revolutionary, are only well-curried stalking horses for the party state. Real leftist opposition died in the 1930's when they sold out to Stalin and Roosevelt.

Now it is time to hear from our friends on the far right, who will tell me it is really the communists or the queers or the Jews who own everything. So long as reactionaries allow themselves to be distracted by their paranoia, they will always miss the point. We live under a revolutionary regime that is owned lock, stock, and barrel by a stupid and corrupt master class that could be overthrown peacefully, if even a fourth of the men in this country would tear up their Social Security cards, boycott all the big corporations, and vote for anyone but a Democrat or Republican. In the current circumstances, the only opposition our party state is facing comes from the world government they are selling us out to. As a Banana Republic, it is only fitting that the United States find themselves subject to international conventions. At the very least, the international community ought to send in U.N. observers to monitor American elections.

—C—

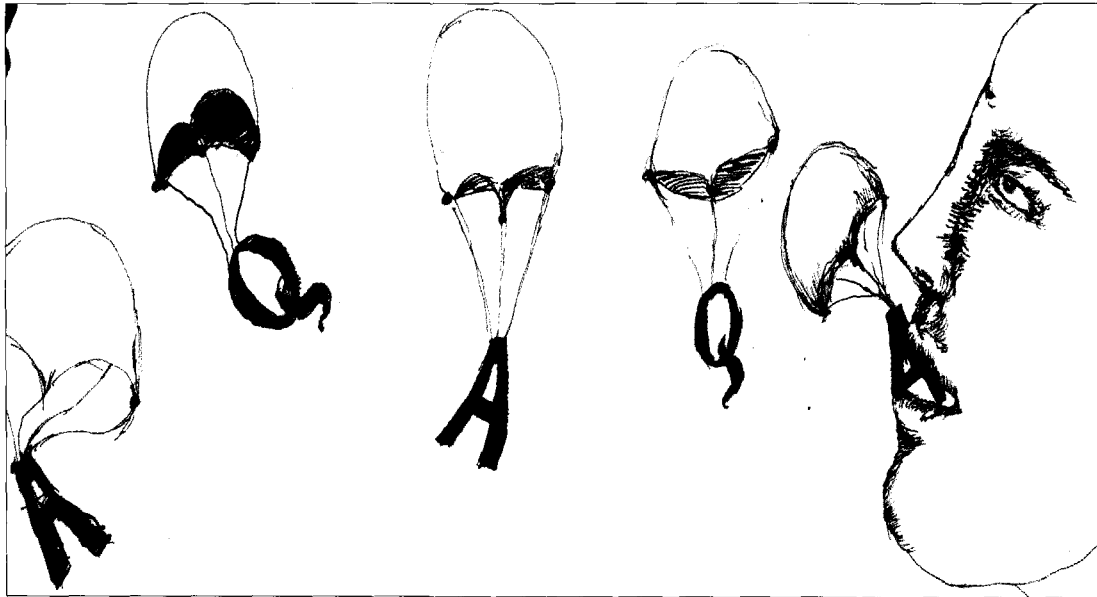
The Window

by Bradley Omanson

On the winter morning that they were wed,
she made of her husband a sole request:
that before old age should overtake them,
habits harden and joints be possessed
by infirmity, they would move to town.
The thought of a widowhood spent alone
amid all that silence filled her with dread
and she begged his promise. He nodded once
in cautious accord. Now, fifty years hence,
she lives contented with neighbors at hand
and a house she can manage. As for him,
he stands at the window in reverie
as though in the empty street he can see
acres and acres of newly plowed land.

Jerry Brown Talks

by Jim Christie



On July 7 *Chronicles* sent freelance writer Jim Christie to interview Jerry Brown in Oakland, California.

Ask any Democratic Party insider in California about Jerry Brown, and he will usually say Brown is one of three things: an embarrassment, a flake, or a jerk. The institutional meanness, the state party's party line, toward the former California governor rests on his failure to meet expectations in registering new Democratic voters when he was the state party chairman and his publicizing of details of the fund-raising he had to do for the party. The dialing-for-dollars weighed so heavily on Brown, he would go on to say during a bid for the party's presidential nomination in 1992, that it turned him into an evangelist railing against the influence of money in American politics. Insiders said it was a gimmick, and even people who shared his liberal politics were dismissive. One center-left Sacramento journalist would tag Brown as California's "hectoring, public monk," which was a clever way of dredging up his ascetic (and ridiculed) lifestyle as governor and his days spent in a Catholic seminary. Of course, nobody foresaw that the sentiments behind Brown's *We the People* and Pat Buchanan's *America First* would inspire Ross Perot's *United We Stand America*. Those who dismissed Brown for pointing out the ugly truth that the Democratic Party, despite its public piety, relies on the same corporate money allegedly reserved for the GOP, the party of business, assumed Brown would return to their fold. That does not seem to be the case. Brown now runs *We the People* from a warehouse in (appropriately) Oakland's Jack London Square, and he broadcasts his nationally syndicated radio show from a nearby studio. Brown's plans in-

clude the construction of a new headquarters for his nonprofit organization that will have a studio for his show, which will appear in larger markets soon. Brown continues to rail against the influence of money in American politics, and for good reason: the day before this July interview took place, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Dwayne Andreas, an industrialist with agribusiness giant Archer-Daniels-Midland Company and a longtime Republican donor, had the month before turned up as cochairman for a presidential dinner to raise \$2.5 million for Democrats. Not surprisingly, the week before the *Journal* broke the story the Environmental Protection Agency, "with the prodding of the Clinton White House," according to reporter Timothy Noah, announced regulations requiring one-tenth of all gasoline in the United States by 1996 to contain corn-based ethanol. Archer-Daniels-Midland Company just so happens to produce about 60 percent of all ethanol in the country. So much for the "change" promised by the Clinton administration.

Q. About the corruption of the political process, specifically the buying and selling of candidates, how is that to be remedied?

A. First, accept it is going on. That means thoroughly condemning the present manner of electing people in the United States—federal, state, and local. It is grossly corrupted and at fundamental variance with democratic ideals.

Q. Why won't Congress touch this issue?

A. Congress raised and spent \$660 million in 1992, or about a

50 percent increase from the previous election in 1990. That money is not coming proportionately from the American people. It's coming disproportionately from a powerful minority of corporate-oriented donors. That destroys any fair system of representation, and it's not acknowledged now by Congress. They don't talk about the problem of corruption. They just talk about the burdens that they experience in raising all this money. But it's far more threatening than that: democracy is being extinguished by a plutocracy of campaign donations, lobbyist influence, and media concentration.

Q. So what's to be done, right now?

A. I believe you have to use the television, the radio, and the post office as the functional equivalent of the town square of old. Also, allow debate to take place around election time that would illuminate the issues and the choices for people without the influence of money that we now see.

Q. Is it really an organizational problem?

A. It's an organizational problem in the sense that organizational ties for average people have been destroyed. The modern economy has undermined community, the ability of people to work together in groups that could have impact on government. Instead, people are increasingly isolated, preoccupied with watching television and going shopping. That's a far cry from America 200 years ago, when there was an elite who deliberated based on principle.

Q. The political problem, then, isn't just a question of organizing, but of identifying principles and worthy standard-bearers?

A. The end-game that we're now seeing is best expressed by the Nixon funeral, where President Clinton, having been elected on a platform of "change," called on the nation to pay homage to the memory of Richard Nixon, the man who essentially said, "Leaders don't need character. They just need to be effective." Two hundred years ago, John Adams, in a letter to his wife, said that with the Declaration of Independence and the founding of a new government, we would have to purify ourselves from our vices and inculcate virtues. He was focusing very clearly on the absolute importance of virtue to American democracy as well as to American leadership. Today's teacher is Richard Nixon, who says virtue is irrelevant, that the statesman has to be a Machiavellian operative, a person skilled in the arts of manipulation and deception. I really believe that says where we are. Unless we recognize that, we don't get anywhere.

Q. One of the great hopes for political change is a third party. Do you think there's a chance that will materialize soon?

A. The two parties appear incapable of offering any real change. That's why I mention Clinton as the apostle of change giving the apotheosis to Nixon, who was the complete antithesis of what American democracy is all about, as expressed by John Adams. A third party logically and conceptually would seem to be the vehicle for *real* change. But all the laws conspire against it, and history tells us that is an unlikely scenario. The local level does present immediate opportunities for action. Taking responsibility for one's neighborhood, meeting with

one's neighbors, that's democracy. There is democracy at the local level, because you can see people, you can get beyond computer-generated letters and manipulated TV ads. You can go to a meeting and debate and argue, which is the essence of democratic consensus-building. Politics at the local level are very important. Even so, all the institutions from the Federal Reserve to Congress to network television focus on the global and utterly ignore the value and importance of the local.

Q. Do you think the national press is to blame for quite a bit of this?

A. The national press is part of the larger system that increasingly functions at a global level, a multinational level, and trivializes the local community. You have, for example, public television, and, at least on public television in San Francisco, KQED, there's very little local programming. For the most part, local programming, they say, is too expensive to produce, so they buy it from somewhere else. Certainly the media has a tremendous focus on what is beyond one's grasp.

Q. Including Washington?

A. Washington, Wall Street, Europe, wherever. There exists a global focus over which we have virtually no control. And where we have some control, there is amnesia. Are children now taught about their neighborhoods? Are they taught their own history? Here, are they taught about Oakland 50 years ago? How Oakland was 100 years ago? About the nature of this particular watershed, this land, this soil? I myself am a product of Yale Law School, the University of California at Berkeley, the Jesuit schools, so I think in terms of a worldview, and yet I am increasingly perceiving the arena of action to be at the local level. And when I say the local level, I don't in any way mean we can forget about what is happening nationally or globally. Rather, we have to force larger institutions to operate in the interest of local autonomy and local power. But they all conspire to do exactly the opposite.

Q. Speaking of amnesia, people forget you were the first person to bring up Whitewater during the 1992 campaign. What do you perceive as Hillary Clinton's role, in that it's not really supervised by a governmental body? Do you think she might have too much power?

A. I can't say Hillary has any more power than Mrs. Reagan. She just exercises it differently. I don't know if I can add on this. But she's certainly spearheading the health care reform, and it remains to be seen exactly what's going to happen. The present state of affairs, at least as it comes out of Senator Moynihan's committee, is a very minor adjustment—throwing some money at people through subsidies or tax credits and committing to a commission that will convene after the next century to consider what to do next. It's like, what happened? As Horace said, the mountain was in labor and it brought forth a mouse, which appears to be the case with Hillary's health care plan and her 500-member secret committee.

Q. What would your proposal on health care reform look like?

A. The most logical system would be the single-payer—and what I envision is something very different from what we now

have. It is based on the notion that health involves people taking more responsibility personally, learning more about their bodies so as not to assault their bodies, as most of us do. Secondly, health involves stopping the poisoning of the environment. And, thirdly, as for the medical profession, it should be based not on profit, but on service, on the healing arts, and on the kind of community perspective that medical care used to be associated with.

Q. That's a tall order.

A. This idea of turning medical care into a commodity, and literally harvesting people who are sick and elderly as sources of billion-dollar cash flows, which is the case today, is an obscenity. I really believe the best health care will occur when doctors and other providers don't earn more based on more intervention and procedures, but are free to exercise their wisdom and their skill more in the nature of a teacher or of someone who is rendering public service. I believe the single-payer will allow us to get there more appropriately.

Q. But what about the costs involved, particularly the taxes government would need to collect to cover a single-payer system?

A. It should not require more taxes. That means it would require a radical reduction in the federal government. And I'm talking about providing the basics—and I don't mean sex-change operations and various cosmetic operations, and, I'm sure, there are many other things you'd want to rate as not basic—but basic care, what we would agree upon to have as citizens. That is a priority, and it should displace some other priority. For example, what is this defense budget all about if there is no war out there and we're spending almost as much as all the countries of the world combined? The White House alone, supposedly, according to the *Washington Times*, consumes \$2 billion a year. Move on from there: agricultural subsidies, perks, other programs of lower value, including the interest on the debt. There is enough of a burden on the citizen that I would have to say that, yes, let's have health care be universally available, and, yes, let's eliminate the insurance companies, and let's have a single-payer system in the manner of Canada, or something similar, but don't demand of the citizens that they add any more taxes to what already is a \$1.5 trillion federal establishment, which has already taken away enough of our freedom.

Q. How was your idea for a flat tax received in Democratic circles?

A. In Democratic circles, not received well at all. It's contrary to what these people believe in terms of the status quo, the progressive income tax. Now, I understand that rich people have a much greater obligation, and I'm perfectly prepared to look at a surcharge. And I think people at the lower end need to have exemptions or need to have some help, compensation, so they're not hit with this flat tax the same way as those who have more disposable income. However, I believe the complexity of taxation, the invasion by government, the cost and the inefficiency on the part of businesses and individuals are too great and are sufficient evils that the system has to be changed. Also, we don't really know who pays taxes like the payroll tax for

Social Security. Who does it fall on? On consumers? On employees? On shareholders? On managers? Very smart economists argue about this endlessly. I have a hunch employees are picking up a good portion of it. If that's the case, let's have a clean tax that everybody can see. It's efficient, it's more honest, and it will reduce the corruption that goes with the capacity to buy loopholes, which is endemic in the present system.

Q. How do we begin to address the growth in government?

A. Government is growing at all levels, because the community is being destroyed. People can't do for themselves or work with their neighbors anymore. Because of our large-scale, professionally controlled, commodity culture, people are rendered more and more impotent to deal with things. Increasingly, everything requires an expert, a permit, and a fee. The message to average people is: you can't do anything; all you can do is join some kind of bureaucracy, private or public, get your check, and start handing it out to people to start covering the basics, like your health care, your education, your transportation, your entertainment. People are garaged in their homes temporarily at night so that they can then get in their cars and be garaged during the day in some paper-pushing private business or public bureaucracy. I think that is the phenomenon that then builds up the federal government to deal with crime and welfare and that subsidizes everyone since nobody can take care of themselves except the affluent. And to those who say the federal government is too big, they have to look at the trends in the concentration of wealth and global decision-making. There is a contradiction between the trajectory of growth and independence, freedom, and keeping government in check.

Q. Gore Vidal said that you and Pat Buchanan were the only two "real" candidates during the campaign. Where does right meet left?

A. Buchanan has the message for the religious group, the right-to-life group. He also has a nationalist message, which is very much obscured by the mainstream media and the mainstream political personalities like Bush and Clinton, who are handmaidens of the New World Order, the global-scale management of things, which is totally contradictory to the neighborhood, to the community, to self-reliance, to freedom as we have traditionally known it.

Q. So there is some sympathy?

A. There is sympathy, because democracy cannot exist as we have known it historically with GATT, with multinational companies, with decisions being made at a level where the individual can't meaningfully participate. Now, I do believe in the Ozone Treaty. I do believe that we should have a treaty to protect the whales. I think we should deal with global warming. When we can understand something, I want to take specific action. But when they talk about creating a GATT that will have a World Trade Organization to set standards that will have an impact on the neighborhood, then I say, no. NIMBY is good, not bad. If everyone would take care of his own backyard, then all the backyards would be better. The way it is today, people are led to believe they have no power over their own

backyards, that their jobs are to watch television and go out and buy stuff. That destroys America. That destroys community. That destroys the human mind. Also, sovereignty is a very important idea. Ironically, Buchanan is afraid of the World Trade Organization because the environmentalists might get control over it. Ralph Nader and the Sierra Club and myself are worried that the World Trade Organization will allow the multinationals to dictate local environmental laws. But both of us turn on the central point: Where should decisions be made? I say decisions should be made in America.

Q. And on the local level, too, right?

A. Even the expansion Commerce Clause should be rethought, because if we're going to give people power, they may want to say that if you want to sell beer in Oakland, you're going to have to recycle the bottles, or that you're going to have to refill the bottles. As a matter of fact, if you go a few blocks from where we're sitting, *there's a business that has bottle refilling*. Now, that will burden Anheuser-Busch and Coca-Cola, but I think that localism, if you really take it seriously, is going to interrupt certain patterns of modern growth and globalism. But I think that's where the battle is, and I think it's a good interruption if we're going to maintain our sanity.

Q. One of the more pressing issues here in California politics is illegal immigration. What's your perspective?

A. We have to look at things we can do something about and things we can't. You cannot have NAFTA and say we want Mexican trucks, Mexican tomatoes, Mexican cars, Mexican TV sets, and Mexican everything else, except Mexicans. That's an absurd notion. As a matter of fact, the governor's office promotes blocking Mexican immigration, while promoting NAFTA. The more trucks you get crossing the border, the more stuff, whether it's drugs or people, that is going to come across. We have this long border with Mexico, so we have to learn to work with Mexicans. But instead of displacing Mexico's corn farmers as NAFTA does, and pushing those people northward, we have to work with a traditionalist Mexico to enable Mexico to be a better place in accordance with its likes, to enhance rural life, to enhance the ability of its people to stay in Mexico, as opposed to joining the global marketplace, which uses them as cheap labor for multinational American companies.

Q. But isn't it true that illegal immigrants are coming here to work?

A. To the extent that Mexico can be incorporated into the North American marketplace, for the next couple of decades that incorporation will just be an incentive for many to join the immigration stream, because it's still better here in terms of money. And what's happening now to Americans is that we don't pick food, don't work on furniture, don't clean dishes, don't do the gardening, don't build housing. The market says find cheaper labor. The cheaper labor is in Mexico, so no matter how many nativists say "Stop the immigrants," as long as the market pressure is attracting immigration, you're not going to stop it. So it's conceptually dishonest to bash immigrants and push market pressure to find the lowest wages. I assure you, if the jobs weren't here, these people wouldn't be coming, and

that's the essence of the problem.

Q. How did being raised Catholic and being educated as a Jesuit shape your political philosophy?

A. It shaped it in a way that would allow me to critique the market and not see it as the god Congress believes it to be. It allowed me to see with some detachment what the latest fashion offers up as truth, to see a long view of Christian history, of seeing secular governments come and go. Having the opportunity of being isolated in a seminary for four years not reading newspapers, not listening to radio or other popular media, and immersing myself in tradition allowed me to look skeptically at what is presented as contemporary reality, which can be filled with illusions, deceptions, and greed.

Q. Where do you think Catholic social thought is headed in this country?

A. I don't know where Catholic social thought is. There's certainly the tradition of the common good, the nonmarket principles of virtue that are totally being demolished by economic analysis, which only looks at marginal utility, input-output, Gross National Product, productivity. All those terms never include justice, virtue, goodness, right and wrong. You either accept a qualitative worldview, or you buy into a quantitative worldview. Catholic social thought has always kept alive the notion of the family wage, the common good, which stand in total opposition to market rationality.

Q. But yet we see the power of the bottom-line in San Francisco, with the closing of churches.

A. I can only explain the closing of churches by the corruption of the Church. A church is a repository of shared experience, of suffering, of initiation—from baptism to marriage to death—and all those memories consecrate a building and make it a shrine that cannot summarily be traded for money. The fact that the Church can't see this or that the bishop can't see it just says to me they've lost their faith and they're not really, authentically a member of this organic body called the Catholic Church. How are they going to replace the closed churches? The idea of merging parish is an abomination. What does that mean, merge churches? Their separate identities have been won out of 150 years of experience. You just kill it, that's all.

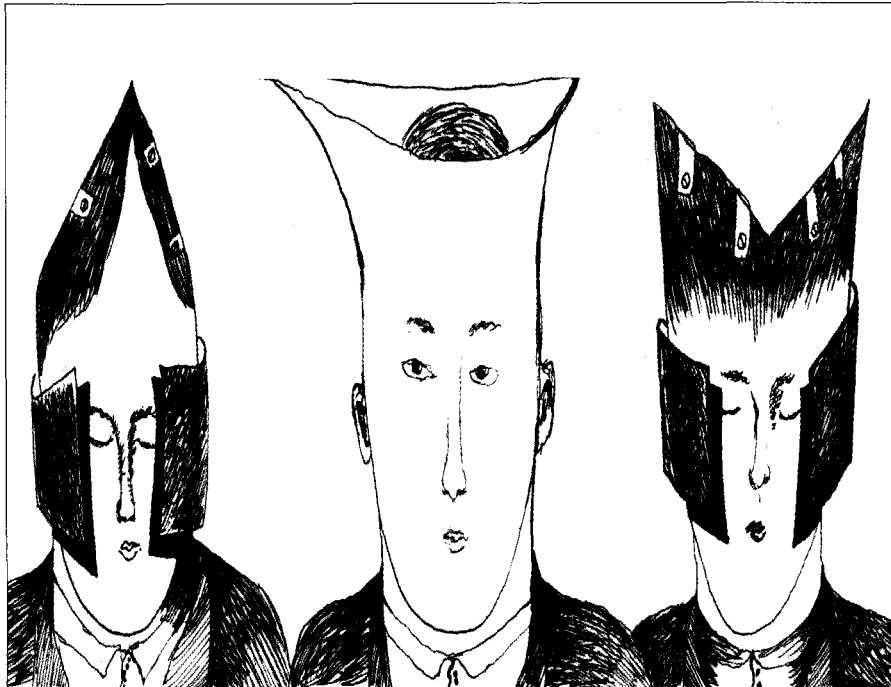
Q. What political issues will you be pressing in the near future, and what plans do you have politically?

A. I'm looking for a more local form of action: enrichment of the community and real deconstruction of the workings of the global economy, global institutions—the central banks, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the World Bank, the multinational companies—and of the way in which our lives are being embedded in a runaway, large-scale, corporate, global culture that is undemocratic, inhuman, and destructive of the environment. That's what I'm focusing on. I want to work where I can to restore vitality to where I am, and through my radio program, to provide a forum for the ideas that really challenge the totally corrupt and bankrupt leadership I perceive to be in Washington.

Political Trust-Busting

The Third-Party Option

by Jeffrey Tucker



In the “nihilistic politics of the 1990’s,” warns a newswriter for the *Wall Street Journal*, “party loyalty counts for almost nothing.” The writer means obeisance to the two major parties, which the civics books imply are ordained by God to rule us. In fact, America needs a breakup of this two-party system, which looks more and more like a one-party apparatus designed to stave off all threats to Leviathan. We need a serious third party, a fourth, a fifth, and a sixth: whatever it takes to spread the “nihilism” D.C. so fears. A Bosnianized country at least deserves a political system that genuinely reflects the reality around us.

We need new political parties, lots of them, parties that come from below, from the people, devoted to advancing single causes or complex philosophies, sane or nutty, scholarly or cranky, warm and fuzzy or filled with hate. Bring them on, and scare the dickens out of the elites. Now is the time for old-fashioned populism. The public’s political instincts may be flawed, even deeply, but they are not as defective as the actual agendas of those in power.

The case for sticking with the Republicans gets thinner every day. Whenever you are tempted to cheer them for a seemingly principled stand, wait a few hours, and they will show their true colors. When, for example, they defeated Clinton’s disgraceful crime bill (at \$33 billion, the only “criminals” it punished were middle-class taxpayers), Newt Gingrich told the nation how badly he wanted a crime bill, just not this one. And

though he voted against the trimmed-down measure (\$30 billion), he and other Republicans prepared the way for it by advocating the same idea that motivates Clinton: federalizing crime control.

This bill passed in what the *New York Times* described as “one of the most partisan sessions” in memory. Sure, and only a few weeks earlier a \$13 billion “education” bill designed to bail out public schools had passed in the Senate, 96 to 4. Partisan “fights” over the medical industry seem increasingly frivolous, with everyone agreeing that insurance companies should be stripped of the right to reject the uninsurable and with only the Democrats being intellectually honest enough to call for complete socialism.

Bill Clinton won the presidency with only 23.76 percent of the eligible electorate, the lowest level of support since 1824. If his presidency is remembered as anything other than a political catastrophe, it will be thanks to the Republicans. In his first two years, Clinton’s only notable legislative “success” has been NAFTA, the regional regulatory and trade bloc the Republicans handed him on a pewter platter (paid for by aggressive lobbyists and unwilling taxpayers). Soon after, the Loyal Opposition geared up to do the same with the World Trade Organization, a GATT-created supranational agency to manage world trade from Geneva, Switzerland. But very few of those who actually and unwillingly sustain government with their tax dollars favored either NAFTA or the WTO.

Despite media handwringing about obstructionism and gridlock in Washington, fewer and fewer political issues are subject to partisan debate at all. When was the last time we had

Jeffrey Tucker is director of research for the Ludwig von Mises Institute in Auburn, Alabama.

a rip-roaring debate on foreign aid, guaranteed foreign loans, or military bases in Europe and Japan, to name just three examples? Both parties are committed to these expensive rackets, yet surely among the general population liberals and conservatives can at least agree that public money ought to stay within United States borders.

The list of issues that—as they say—transcend party lines is long indeed. Both parties favor maximizing government revenue, through increasing taxes, cutting selected marginal rates, or putting young mothers to work. Both favor American involvement in the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations. Both favor centralized educational authority and continued federal funding for public schools. Both are subservient to the interests of large corporations, and that usually means supporting various forms of fiscal and regulatory favors under ever-changing ideological banners. And both maintain wish-lists of countries against which we should wage war, and whether it is Haiti or North Korea, it is still American lives on the line.

Neither party seriously considers cuts in the most grisly aspects of the welfare state or limits on immigration, questions monopoly control of money and banking in the Federal Reserve, advocates large cuts in the inheritance tax, wonders about the \$300 billion we spend on the military, rethinks the space program, or opposes the official discrimination of civil rights. I would like a political party that raises questions like: Why do we need a Surgeon General? Why should a free country have an armed Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms? Why is it illegal for banks to make privacy contracts with their depositors? The list of inadmissible yet perfectly reasonable questions is endless.

If Republicans were in a real competition with Democrats, it would be in their interest to cause more trouble. A *Time*-CNN poll taken in August revealed that 91 percent of the public has little or no confidence that Washington can solve social problems. How, then, can we explain why both parties pretend otherwise? What accounts for the bipartisan conspiracy against the wishes of the electorate? We could point to the explanations drawn from public choice economics (log-rolling and minority-interest politicking), but there is also a broader reason. The major parties represent the interest of the Establishment, and the Establishment stays established thanks to the power of the central state. Thus, both parties must maintain and enhance that power, regardless of public opinion.

There are enormous barriers to bringing about the dream of authentic electoral choice. People who try to start third parties to field candidates at either the national or the state level say the system is rigged against them at every level. That is to be expected. The Soviet system was also rigged; that is what happens when an oligarchy controls a nation. But that system eventually broke up, and ours may, too.

What follows is an account of some third parties organized nationally as efforts to further the breakup of the two-party system. Hundreds exist on paper, but since one has to draw the line somewhere, I have listed only those that have run at least one candidate for public office in 1992 or since. There are no vote totals or “success” stories here; by that standard all these groups would seem to be failures. By any principled standard, however, all are successes for even surviving. We will go from right to left, accepting that these ideological categories get a bit messy in third-party politics.

The American Party was founded in 1969 as a hard-right, constitutionalist group devoted to resisting the onslaught of everything worth hating about American politics, including centralization, egalitarianism, and high taxes. It is isolationist on foreign policy and wants a cutoff of immigration. The party’s Wallaceite views still scare media types not in touch with the private views of the masses. It has a publication (the *American*), which explains their opinions, but it is their present slogan that is truly tantalizing: “The American Party is what America was!” It also opposes NAFTA and the WTO. (P.O. Box 25940, Richmond, Virginia 23260)

The Populist Party is well named, given its textbook populist bent. The Populists despise big government and big business and oppose foreign aid and foreign wars. Though they want tax cuts, they are not laissez-faire on economic issues. As ideological heirs of the free silver movement, their monetary views are of the Lincoln-money variety: inflationist but opposed to the banker cartel. They are especially exercised about Washington’s abuse of police power, as in the Waco massacre and the Randy Weaver shoot-out in Idaho. On trade, they are old-fashioned protectionists but were also passionately opposed to NAFTA and the WTO. (*Populist Observer*, P.O. Box 15499, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15237)

Think of the United States Taxpayers Party as the ’64 Goldwater campaign without the Cold War rhetoric. Run by activist and former Nixon official Howard Phillips, it made a splashy debut in 1992 among Republicans tired of Reagan-Bush compromises. The party emphasizes issues like repealing the income tax, ending foreign aid, respecting states’ rights, and clamping down on inflationary monetary policies. Oddly, however, it also worries about the Panama Canal and Jonas Savimbi. In short, this is pretty much the old *National Review*. That the party is considered extreme right is a measure of how times, and the right, have devolved. In California, the Taxpayers Party merged with the American Independence Party for the 1992 election. (450 Maple Ave. East, Vienna, Virginia 22180)

The Patriot Party is the new kid on the block, made up of former Northeastern Perot activists with a flair for organizing, plus members and leaders of the New Alliance Party, Lenora B. Fulani’s party, which always had the feel of black nationalism to me. But what the heck: if Gingrich and Clinton can team up on NAFTA, then Perot and Fulani can team up to stop it and similar insider tricks. It wants no foreign aid, no foreign lobbyists, and no foreign wars. It has wasted no time in fielding candidates for Senate races in Pennsylvania and plans a big splash in 1996. (16 South Broadway, Wind Gap, Pennsylvania 18091)

There should be a day of national mourning if the Prohibition Party ever fades from the scene. Founded in 1872, the party today takes “credit” for achieving the direct election of senators, women’s suffrage, and, naturally, Prohibition. In short, its followers are the Protestant pietists you read about in histories of the Progressive Era, which makes them seem somewhat reactionary today. They want to privatize Social Security, institute a gold standard, end illegal immigration, respect states’ rights, return education to the states, sell all government-owned enterprises, abolish foreign aid, defend our shores, institute free trade, stop preferential trade treaties like NAFTA and GATT, and pass the Human Life Amendment. Oh yes—and prohibit all liquor. “No other major party has addressed the issue in their platform,” a spokesman explains. (*National*

Statesman, P.O. Box 2635, Denver, Colorado 80201)

The Libertarian Party's national platform is the most intellectually rigorous of any third party's, but in actual practice this party becomes unpredictable. It favors eliminating taxes, ending central banking, stopping foreign aid and interventionism, but also opening borders completely (thereby one-upping Julian Simon) and repealing state-level restrictions on pornography. The national party has trumpeted NAFTA and fallen silent on foreign policy, and so increasingly the real action has shifted to the state level. Recall that New York radio porno-jock Howard Stern was briefly a Libertarian gubernatorial candidate. (*Libertarian Party News*, 1528 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20003)

The Grassroots Party has an appealing name, until you figure out that it is a pun. Its single issue is the repeal of laws against marijuana, plus a more robust enforcement of the Bill of Rights. It makes large and seemingly exaggerated claims for the glories of hemp, its potential use in clothing, timber, etc. It takes no position on economic issues or on foreign policy, but in Iowa this party merged with the Libertarians. (*The Canvass*, P.O. Box 8011, St. Paul, Minnesota 55108)

The Natural Law Party, founded in 1992, is to politics what Unitarianism is to religion, a way to be involved without sectarian struggles. Rather than agitate for this or that particular policy, the Natural Law Party favors various stress-reducing meditationist strategies ("TM-Sidhi") for achieving world peace and ending domestic violence. Its actual program favors "limited government," "universal education," decentralist solutions to public problems, and an end to American subsidies for European militaries. "America should not be the world's policeman," the platform says, although the United States should take a "parental" role in fostering world prosperity. A move is under consideration to merge the Libertarians and the National Law Party before 1996. (*Solutions*, 51 West Washington St., Fairfield, Iowa 52556)

The Green Party operates in 72 countries, but the United States only got its version in 1984, and it did not become nationally active here until 1989. It favors environmentalist policies and nonviolent solutions to social problems, decentralism, "grassroots democracy," noninterventionism in foreign affairs, multiculturalism in social affairs, a "post-patriarchal" social order, and more social responsibility. It opposes foreign aid generally but would like to strengthen the role of the United Nations. It is very active in seven states in opposition to both parties and fought NAFTA tooth-and-nail. Asked why it took so long for the United States to have a Green Party, a spokesman pointed to the peculiar "winner-take-all" electoral system of this country. (*Green Horizon*, RFD 2, Box 3292, Bowdoinham, Maine 04008)

The New Party is mainstream progressive, and it recently joined with the Wisconsin Labor-Farm Party. It is an attempt to create a nondogmatic leftist party, opposed to full-blown socialism but favoring a single-payer medical system. In practice, its politics are close to the black caucus of the Democratic Party. It tends not to run candidates but to endorse candidates who are already running. Generally, it avoids foreign policy. (*Progress Report*, 227 West 40th St., #1303, New York, New York 10018)

The Socialist Party was founded in 1901 and claims, probably rightly, to have had an enormous influence on American public affairs from that time to the present. Today, they say, "Socialism is not mere government ownership, a welfare state,

or a repressive bureaucracy," but rather "a new social and economic order in which workers and consumers control production, and community residents control their neighborhoods, homes, and schools." Hmm. Although it is not clear why the United States needs yet another social-democratic party besides the Republicans and Democrats, the Socialists do appear to be more independently minded on foreign policy. (*Socialist*, 516 West 25th St., #404, New York, New York 10001)



ur two parties are a tax-gouging cartel. How nice if they

would disappear, to be replaced by honestly named parties, including the America First Party, the Southern League, the Western Independence Party, and the Property Rights Party. Then we could see how many people would vote for the Foreign Aid Party or the GATT Party.

I admit to feeling silly when I asked the woman on the phone what the Communist Party stands for, and she seemed to get suspicious when I did. This is the party of Gus Hall, who has sounded much like a Democratic candidate in years past: favoring more national concern for workers and for the poor, supporting socialized medicine, and the like. Today, the party is roughly Gorbachevian in domestic affairs and relatively isolationist on foreign policy, which puts it to the right of the following Trotskyite groups. (*People's Weekly World*, 239 West 23rd St., New York, New York 10011)

The Socialist Workers Party (*The Militant*, 406 West St., New York, New York 10014) is the quintessential American Trotskyite party, with splits in every decade for 50 years. It competes with offshoots, including the Workers League (*The Bulletin*, P.O. Box 5174, Southfield, Michigan 48086) and the Workers World Party (*Workers World*, 55 West 17th St., New York, New York 10011). Without getting into the internecine struggles—they do not acknowledge each other's existence—there is little hope among these groups of uniting in the common struggle on behalf of exploited workers and peasants.

In addition to all these national parties, which are necessarily limited due to national election rules, there are also hundreds of parties at the state level. Only a baker's dozen have fielded candidates in the last two years, however. With the revival of states' rights/Tenth Amendment concerns in every state in the country, these are probably due for a growth spurt.

The Alaska Independence Party (745 East 4th Ave., #500, Anchorage, Alaska 99501), once solidly secessionist, is the

party of Governor Walter Hickel, Nixon's former Secretary of the Interior, who was elected in 1990. But factionalism has splintered the group to produce the Alaska First Party, which Hickel may join. The name is the most appealing and repeatable party name to come along in years. Indeed, why not put Alaska first? Or Montana, Idaho, Nevada, or Texas?

The Peace and Freedom Party of California (P.O. Box 2325, Aptos, California 95001) is less a full-fledged political party than a container for various left-wing groups that work to capture its enviable ballot status. From year to year, it bounces around from sexual issues to racial issues to immigration issues, none of which appear to have anything to do with peace or freedom.

In Illinois, a new party called Term Limits and Tax Limits (215 Ridgewood Rd., Riverside, Illinois 60546) is devoted to pushing just that. It was spawned by the statewide initiative movement, which kept getting swatted down by the state supreme court. Rather than continue having referendum topics stolen away from them, a Republican pro-life businessman formed this party as a way to vocalize opposition to judicial tyranny.

Connecticut's voters can choose between Concerned Citizens of Connecticut (50-12 Northridge Dr., Waterbury, Connecticut 06708), a conservative group, and A Connecticut Party (231 Farmington Ave., Farmington, Connecticut 06032), which is the party of current liberal governor Lowell Weicker. In Vermont, a party named the Liberty Union (183 Western Ave., Brattleboro, Vermont 05301) does little but run a candidate against Representative Bernie Sanders. You see, before Sanders became famous, he ran as their nominee, so they hate his guts.

Washington, D.C., has its own Statehood Party (441 4th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001), which would be a good idea if the party also favored an impenetrable partition around the city—to keep outsiders away, of course. Unfortunately, the movement is an open scam to swell the Congressional Black Caucus. This party's goal gets set back with every evening news broadcast of the day's death toll.

May the politics of the nation soon look like New York's in 1994. Besides the two major candidates, disgruntled Republicans, Democrats, and Perotvians have formed the Independence Fusion Party to push the other two around. The Conservative Party (486 78th St., Brooklyn, New York 11209) is shoving Republicans to the right on tax issues, and the Right-to-Life Party (Box 144, Centerport, New York 11721-0144) supports a Republican social agenda while others cower. The Democrats have to worry about the Liberal Party (381 Park Ave. South, New York, New York 10016) holding leftist feet to the fire, while the New Alliance Party (500 Greenwich St., #201, New York, New York 10013) will also be on the ballot for those who want to stick it to whitey. Anyway, everyone will probably vote along racial and ethnic lines anyway, as seems to be a still-legal tradition in New York.

None of this considers the explosion of "independents" running at all levels. I confess to being overjoyed that socialist Bernie Sanders is in Congress as an Independent. It forces the television, radio, and print media to list something other than the two major parties—even though his votes are largely predictable. And Douglas Wilder in Virginia, lacking other options, has decided to run as an Independent against Democrat Charles Robb and Republican Oliver North for Senate. At least he will get the black vote. Running as an Independent, the

Ross Perot phenomenon made for an interesting 1992; let it continue in 1996.

Some people say it is wasting your vote to pull the lever for a third party. Not at all: you cement your irrelevance by voting for the two major parties in any national election. You are statistically more likely to be hit by a car on the way to the voting station than to swing an election. Better to be one of the 1,000 to vote for the Prohibition Party than one of the 40 million who vote Republican. At least that way you cause the Establishment trouble, however minor.

Of course, third-party candidates always have problems dealing with the media. The media rarely mention alternatives until a few days in advance of the election, and then they use disparaging tones. Here is a representative example, from the *Washington Post* (November 9, 1992): "On ballots across the nation are the names of people utterly unlike George, Bill, and Ross: women, blacks, pensioners, a convict, and a mystically inclined scientist—all seeking the highest office in the land." Gee, we had better stick with another honest, rich, and rational white guy.

When third-party candidates face the camera, they have none of the polish of those who have trained for it their whole lives. That is because they are *real* people with *actual* jobs. The best comment I heard about James Stockdale, Ross Perot's vice presidential nominee who debated Gore and Quayle, was this: "How refreshing to see a real person on national television." And that is exactly why most people found this debate so difficult to watch. We need to get used to real people like our friends and neighbors being on national television and in public office; this is what used to be called self-government.

In the past, people would say there is too much at stake to throw your vote away on a third party. National security! The Supreme Court! Fiscal sanity! All these hung by a thread. But these arguments are less and less plausible. The next Republican in national office will be very much like the last four, or probably worse. Likewise for the next Democrat. So why not make your voice count? For my part, I would vote for a man like Gus Hall before I would vote for a phony like Jack Kemp.

Note the lack of real conservative options at the national level for Republicans. It is not clear why. There are plenty of liberal candidates and groups, which is odd given how faithfully the Democrats have upheld a leftist agenda. But the Republicans have betrayed their alleged principles for 40 years and presided over the largest expansion of the regulatory and welfare state since the end of World War II. OSHA, the EEOC, the EPA, and the Disabilities Act are all Republican programs. Add to that the advocacy of global empire, still a reflexive tendency among most of them, and the Republicans really should be called the Big Government Party. Until they rethink their commitment to globaloney and corporate welfare, they always will be.

Why, then, has there not arisen a formidable liberty-and-property alternative to mainstream Republicans? A theory batted around for years says that conservatives desire a depoliticized social order, which is the proper attitude, but that disinclines individualists to engage in radical political organization and agitation. We might also point to the disincentives created by the media. They portray liberal third-party candidates as affable idealists, but imply that anyone to the right of the official Republican nominee is probably a secret admirer of Hitler.

That is why groups like the United States Taxpayers Party represent praiseworthy pioneer efforts to give authentic conservatives someone to vote for besides whomever Northeastern Rockefeller interests choose to serve up. Another alternative might be the Constitution Party being formed by movie producer Aaron Russo (1590 Lindacrest Dr., Beverly Hills, California 90210), which promises libertarianism without the baggage. This is probably just the beginning of what will become available as we approach the 1996 presidential election.

Third-party organizing would seem to make sense right now. It might be especially successful in the South. Though the region holds the largest conservative voting bloc in the country, some people in the Deep South will never support a Republican candidate under any circumstances. Pollsters sometimes attribute this to generational gratitude toward Franklin Roosevelt, but, in fact, memories go back further. The Republicans will never be forgiven for the crimes of Reconstruction, that barbarous decade which no one else in the nation remembers and which, in the South, is only spoken about in hushed and angry tones.

Where is the party that represents the South's interests as a region? Where are the famed fire-eaters of yesteryear, the Rebels admired by all of 19th-century Christendom? The old-timey States Rights Party of Georgia does not even field candidates anymore. As it stands, Southern nationalists, who

increase every time a battle flag is torn down, lack a party vehicle of any sort. The South needs a party devoted to one end: throwing off the yoke of northern oppression. This party could point out that Washington treats the South as a conquered nation: the Justice Department "investigates" every minor social disturbance from Ovett, Mississippi, to Wedowee, Alabama.

Trends suggest our future lies with political parties with an anti-Washington regional focus. We need, for example, a Party of the West to counter the two parties of the Northeast. How wonderful to see national debates between six candidates, two representing D.C. and four representing various regions. If only 9 percent of the public thinks D.C. can solve our social problems, there is no reason to swear allegiance to the central state as if we were in a world war. Whatever your politics, it is better to fight it out on the state and local levels than to send taxes to Capitol Hill.

Our two parties are a tax-gouging cartel. How nice if they would disappear, to be replaced by honestly named parties, including the America First Party, the Southern League, the Western Independence Party, and the Property Rights Party. Then we could see how many people would vote for the Foreign Aid Party or the GATT Party. In this field, even partisans of the Articles of Confederation could get another crack at it.



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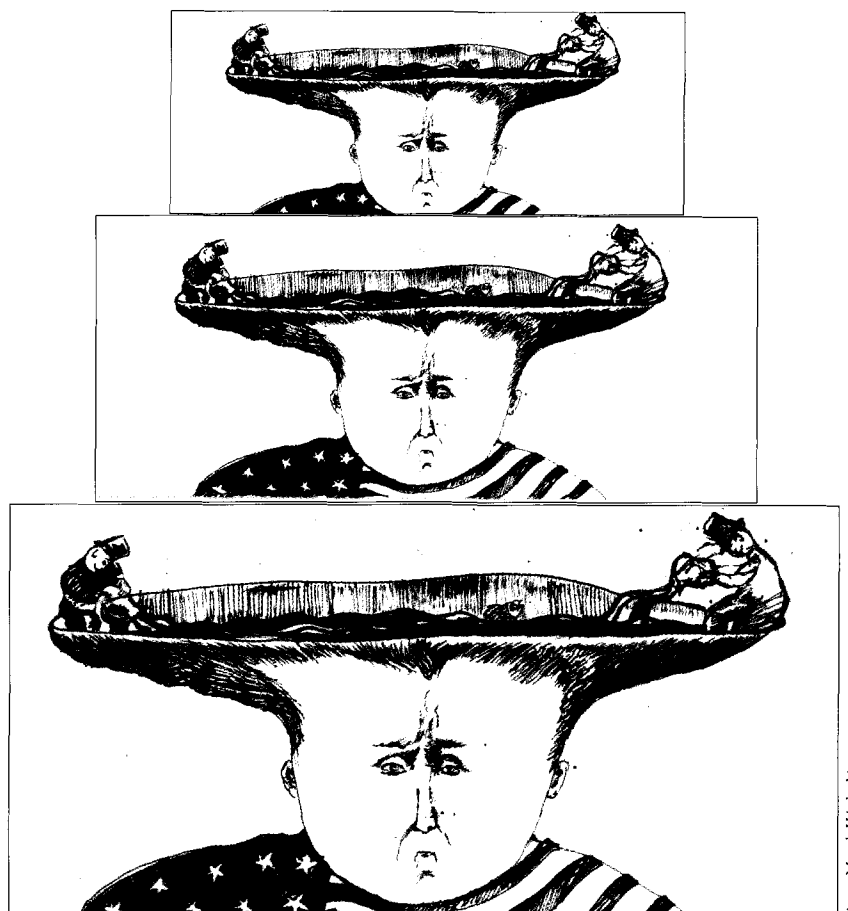
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NOVEMBER 1994/25

The Impotent American Voter

by Richard Winger



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Our great-great-grandfathers, if they were American voters, enjoyed greater opportunity to change policy with their votes than we do today. It is a paradox that as the number of Americans permitted to vote has increased over the past century, the power of those votes has diminished. Many legislators and judges, in their hearts, do not really believe that the voters know best, and they have curtailed certain kinds of voting rights that Americans formerly exercised. The rights of American voters to organize new political parties, and to vote for candidates of their choice, are weaker today than they were 70 years ago.

Recently, voters in Canada, Russia, Japan, and Western and Central Europe created new political parties and either voted them into power or gave them the status of dominant opposition parties. What would happen if the voters of the United States created a new political party and tried to vote it into power? If the new political party were created during an even-numbered year, voters would learn that, in many states, it could not even get on the ballot, no matter how much popular support it had.

The Republican Party was founded on July 6, 1854. During the autumn 1854 elections, the Republican Party elected more members to the U.S. House, and more state governors, than

any other party. That was how American voters of the 19th century told the government to change direction. The same is true today in most other nations, where the deadline for a new political party, or any political party, to qualify for the ballot is often only a month before the election. In South African elections this year, Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party qualified for the ballot less than a week before the election.

But in the United States, incredibly, some states require a new party to qualify for the ballot more than a year before an election. A new party that wishes to qualify for the November 1996 ballot in California and Ohio will be required to do so no later than mid-October 1995. If a new party had been organized on July 6 of this year, it would not have been able to get on the November 1994 ballot in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, or Wyoming, even if it had the ability to find candidates and organize petition drives in a single week. That is because the legal deadline for qualifying for the ballot in those states precedes mid-July of an election year. So much for any group of voters who might have wanted to duplicate the successful founding of the Republican Party!

Early qualifying deadlines for new parties are fairly recent de-

Richard Winger is editor of Ballot Access News (Box 470296, San Francisco, CA 94147, 415-922-9779).

velopments in American history. Senator Robert La Follette was nominated for President in Cleveland by the new Progressive Party on July 6, 1924. According to the *New York Times* of July 12, 1924, which surveyed the ballot access restrictions that La Follette faced, in no state had the petition deadline passed. In 30 of the 48 states, the petition deadline was not until October 1924. No state required more than 12,000 signatures, and in all 48 states put together, approximately 50,000 signatures were required. La Follette ended up on the ballot of all states except one, Louisiana (where only 1,000 signatures were needed to get on the ballot, but where the signers could not be registered members of the Democratic or Republican parties, which was too much of a hurdle for La Follette). In November, La Follette carried one state in the electoral college and polled 17 percent of the popular vote.

By contrast, a new party formed for the 1994 election needed to collect 3,501,629 valid signatures if it wanted to run a full slate of candidates for all federal and state offices. A party in Russia needs only 100,000 signatures to get on the ballot for all offices; a party in South Africa needs a mere 10,000. In Great Britain and Canada, no petitions are required; instead, candidates of all parties qualify by paying a filing fee.

It is true that Ross Perot got on the ballot in all 50 states in 1992. He needed 805,759 valid signatures to do the job, and he did it. But what few people know is that many states have made it easier for a third party or independent *presidential* candidate to get on the ballot than for third party or independent candidates for *other offices*. For instance, in Florida in 1992, a third party or independent presidential candidate needed 60,312 signatures, but a third party or independent candidate for any statewide office needed 180,936.

In Georgia in 1992, a third party needed 26,955 valid signatures to get on the ballot for statewide office, but 134,770 additional signatures were needed to qualify a full slate of candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives, another 200,000 (approximately) signatures to get all legislative candidates on the ballot, and still another 700,000 (approximately) to get its candidates for county office on the ballot. The Georgia law requires a separate petition for each third party or independent candidate for district or county office. The petitions are not needed for parties that polled at least 20 percent of the vote in the entire nation for President in the last election or for parties that polled at least 20 percent of the vote for Georgia governor.

Meanwhile, Republican and Democratic candidates in Florida and Georgia are not required to submit any signatures to get themselves on their own party's primary ballots, as long as they are willing to pay filing fees. New party candidates in both states must pay the same filing fees as well as submit the signatures detailed above.

The result of ballot access restrictions is that no party, other than the two major parties, has been able to put candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives on the ballot in even *half* of the districts since 1920, when the Socialist Party did it for the last time. It has therefore been theoretically impossible for the voters to elect any party to power in the House, other than the Democrats and Republicans, during most of our lifetimes.

Because the Democrats and Republicans themselves do not contest all important elections, restrictions on third party ballot access also mean that the voters frequently have no choice whatsoever on their ballot. Each year, either the Democrats or

the Republicans fail to run any candidate for one-third of all state legislative races. This means that in one-third of all districts, the voter is faced with only one candidate on the ballot for state legislature. In Arkansas, where the ballot access laws are so tough that no third party has qualified since 1970, 75 percent of state legislators are usually elected with *no* opponent on the November ballot.

Why do these restrictions exist? The U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld restrictive ballot access laws in Georgia in 1971, in California and Texas in 1974, and in Washington State in 1986, says that they are needed to avoid "voter confusion" and to preserve "stability." In an opinion on June 7, 1994, the U.S. Court of Appeals, 10th circuit, upheld an early Kansas petition deadline on the grounds that the state has an interest in "voter education." In another opinion on July 14, 1994, the U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th circuit, upheld a Washington State deadline of July 5 on grounds of . . . administrative convenience for elections officials! These are just polite ways of saying that the courts do not trust the voters to choose wisely, if they have meaningful choices other than voting Democratic or Republican.

Some might argue that the two-party system is useful and that ballot access restrictions are therefore helpful. This ignores American history, which teaches that a two-party system works better when the people are freely permitted to organize new political parties.

"Two-party system" is a political science term, describing a system in which two political parties are naturally bigger than all other parties. Such systems invariably exist when a nation elects its officials on a "winner-take-all" basis rather than with proportional representation. If a nation does not use proportional representation, a two-party system comes into existence, even when the government does not discriminate for or against any political parties or impose barriers to the formation of new parties.

In an ideal two-party system, the two major parties are fairly evenly balanced, so that when the governing party falters or becomes corrupt, or its ideas fail, there is a preexisting political party strong enough to oust it. In a good two-party system, voter turnout is high, because a relatively small share of the vote can tip the balance between the two major parties, and a voter senses that his or her vote is important.

In the United States, the two-party system worked far better in the period 1870-1900 than it does today. During that period, control of the U.S. House of Representatives alternated between the two major parties, on the average, every four years. Furthermore, the swing was sometimes staggering: the House went Republican in 1888 by a margin of 166 to 159, but in 1890 the Democrats won it by 235 to 88. Also, the Republicans won it in 1880 by 147 to 135, but in 1882 it was Democratic by 197 to 118. There was no need for term limits. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, voter turnout was never better than in that period of our nation's history. The percentage of voters who were able to vote and who did vote never dipped below 75 percent in the period 1876-1892.

There were absolutely no government barriers back then to people organizing new parties, and they did so frequently. Third parties, particularly parties representing farmers, were strong in that period. Except in 1888, third parties won some seats in the House in every election during that period, peaking with 40 members in 1896.

Compare that period with elections today. Our voter

turnout has never been worse. Only 50 percent of the eligible voters cast a ballot in the presidential election in 1988. Turnout in the 1992 presidential primaries was the worst ever for presidential primaries. The November 1992 election brought a reprieve, up to 55 percent, but primaries and elections since then have slumped to new turnout lows. Furthermore, the same party, the Democratic Party, has enjoyed uninterrupted control of the House of Representatives for over 40 years, the longest period of one-party rule of either branch of Congress in the nation's history.

The result of ballot access restrictions is that no party, other than the two major parties, has been able to put candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives on the ballot in even *half* of the districts since 1920, when the Socialist Party did it for the last time.

It should be obvious, then, that creating barriers to the entry of new political parties does not help the two-party system. There is no reason for such barriers, except to stifle competition. And now Congress is about to take another step to discourage new parties. The federal campaign spending bill passed by the Senate last year creates a discriminatory formula for distributing public campaign funds. Any Democratic or Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate will be eligible for a public campaign subsidy of up to 20 times as much money as the candidate raises privately, if he or she has an opponent who does not abide by voluntary spending limits. But any third party or independent candidate in the same position could never receive a subsidy even as large as the amount of money he or she had raised privately.

As an example of how this could work, imagine that Independent Vermont Congressman Bernie Sanders were running as an Independent for the Senate. Even though Sanders might have raised \$800,000 and the Democrat in the race might have raised only \$60,000, if the Republican in the race had raised \$1,620,000 (thus exceeding the voluntary spending cap of \$1,200,000), the Democrat in the race would receive \$800,000 from the U.S. Treasury, whereas Sanders would receive only \$420,000.

A Senate employee who worked on this bill was asked what principle supported the idea that public funding should be dependent on a candidate's party, rather than on his or her level of support. He answered, "That's just Senator Ford's philosophy" (referring to Wendell Ford, senator from Kentucky, an architect of the bill).

In 1990 the United States signed the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting on Human Rights, pledging itself (along with the other signatory nations, mostly Europeans) to "respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, without discrimination," and to "respect the right of individuals and groups to establish, in full freedom, their own political parties or other political organizations and provide such political parties and organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law." American policy, however, is very different. It pays only lip service to the idea that voters should be free to establish new political parties and that the government should not discriminate against new parties, and the mass media refuse to discuss this discrepancy.

American voters have recently lost voting power in other ways as well. Almost half of the states provide for initiatives to amend state laws, a means by which voters can bypass state legislatures and enact law changes on their own. Initiatives have existed in parts of the United States since the turn of the century, and laws enacted by initiative are subject to judicial review by the courts, just as any law enacted by a state legislature is also subject to judicial review.

But just in the last year, two state supreme courts have invalidated state initiatives on a new basis: not that the laws passed by the voters were unconstitutional, but that the petitions which got them on the ballot did not have enough signatures! The first instance was on September 30, 1993, when the Florida Supreme Court invalidated a Tampa city initiative, which had been passed almost a year earlier, on the grounds that some of the people who had signed the initiative petition were on the "inactive" portion of the voter registration rolls. The court ruled that "inactive" voters (those who had not voted in the preceding two years but had voted in the preceding five years) were not eligible to sign initiative petitions, meaning the initiative did not have enough valid signatures of registered voters and was invalid (the initiative repealed a gay rights ordinance). The second decision occurred on May 13, 1994, when the Nebraska Supreme Court ruled that the term-limits measure that had passed in 1992 also lacked sufficient signatures on its petition. The court ruled that the voters had (unconsciously) voted to change the number of signatures needed for an initiative back in 1990. That 1990 constitutional amendment, put on the ballot by the legislature, had ostensibly done nothing but require that only registered voters could sign initiative petitions. But, surprise, the court ruled that the 1990 amendment also changed the number of signatures from 10 percent of the last vote cast for governor to 10 percent of the number of registered voters . . . even though another portion of the state constitution continued to say explicitly that the requirement was 10 percent of the last vote cast!

Regardless of the arguments about the number of signatures, once an initiative passes, it clearly can be said to have had voter support. Since the entire purpose of a petition is to show voter support in advance of an election, once the election has been held there is no longer any mystery about whether the idea has voter support; questions about how much support the petition had are no longer relevant. Yes, review an initiative after the election for its constitutionality, if challenged, but do not try to fault the petition; it is irrelevant.

If you doubt this, imagine someone trying to get a law (that had been passed by a legislature) thrown out after it had been signed into law, on the grounds that it did not get enough votes

... in committee. Once such a bill reaches the floor and is passed by both houses of a legislature and signed by the governor, no one would argue that, because it should not have reached the floor of one of the legislative chambers, it was invalid. A legislative committee, like an initiative petition, is a screening procedure, and if the "committee of the whole" (i.e., the legislative body as a whole, or the whole body of voters) approves an idea, details about the screening process are no longer relevant. But courts can get away with invalidating initiatives in this manner because they really do not believe in the initiative procedure.

A final indication that voters are losing clout is that they recently lost the right to cast a write-in vote. On June 8, 1992, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Burdick v. Takushi* ruled that the state may prevent a voter from voting for someone who meets the constitutional qualifications to hold the office yet whose name is not on the ballot. Never before had the Court upheld a restriction on the voter's freedom of choice. The case was from Hawaii, one of five states that bans all write-in space on ballots.

There is no good reason to ban write-in votes. If the voters elect someone by write-in vote who does not meet the constitutional requirements to hold a particular office, such a person will not be sworn in to that position. However, in practice, voters never elect anyone by write-in vote who is ineligible to hold the office. But voters *do* frequently elect write-in candidates. Write-in candidates were elected to Congress in 1930, 1954, 1958, 1980, and 1982; and hundreds of write-in candidates have been elected to state legislatures, most recently in

Nebraska (1988), Virginia (1989), and Rhode Island (1990). A write-in candidate was almost elected to the Colorado legislature in 1992. Write-ins are useful when the voters learn something unsavory about the candidates on the ballot and it is too late for anyone else to qualify for the election. Write-ins are especially important in state legislative elections, because so many (over 25 percent) of them inevitably have only one candidate listed on the ballot.

Back in the period 1890-1940, almost half the state supreme courts ruled, or stated in *dicta*, that write-ins had to be permitted or the election would not be free. Only two state supreme courts said the opposite. Until the *Burdick* case, no federal court had ever ruled that write-ins could be banned. But when the U.S. Supreme Court said that it is constitutional to ban write-in votes, the decision received so little notice that the *New York Times* did not even run a separate article about the decision. Instead, it mentioned it at the end of an article that was mainly describing another of the day's Supreme Court opinions.

There are groups working to protect and expand the initiative and to relax ballot access restrictions. Barbara Vincent (P.O. Box 11351, Memphis, TN 38111, 901-327-6824) heads up a national campaign to increase the number of states with initiative provisions, and the Coalition for Free & Open Elections (P.O. Box 20263, New York, NY 10011) works on the ballot access problem. The erosion of the electorate's power can be reversed, if enough people become aware of the problem. ©

The Widower

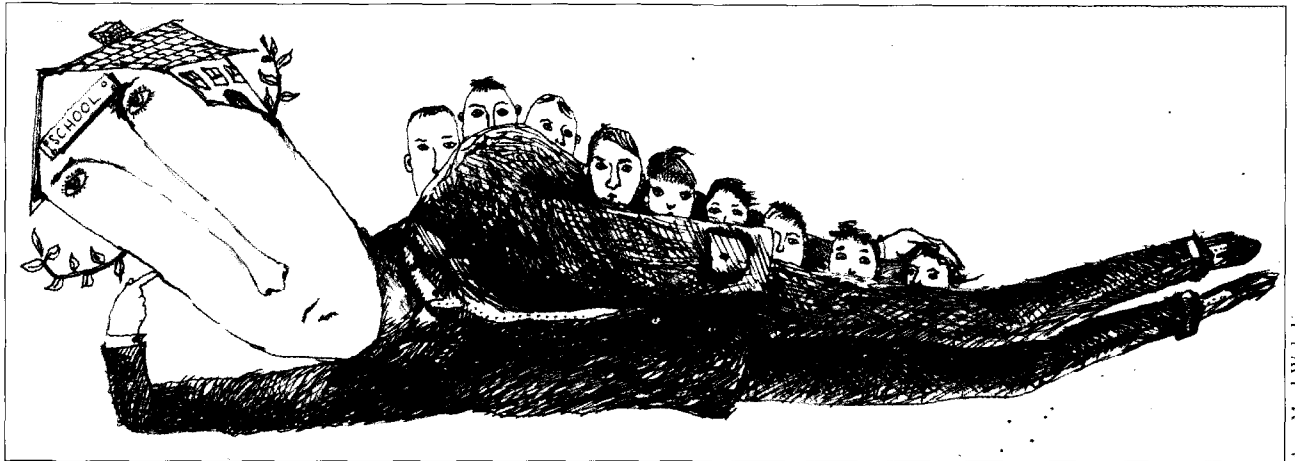
by Bradley Omanon

It may have been only the consequence
of age or grief (or of something worse,
something he'd never admit to himself)
that he heard her again, heard the scrabble
of mice on loosely piled-up plates
as the clatter of dishes being stacked
on a cupboard shelf. Later that night,
forgetting he'd put on the kettle himself,
he waited for its insistent shrill
to summon her from her sewing, and when
it persisted, shrugged it off as only
wind in the wires alongside the house.
He sat in his chair in the upstairs room
and listened to hear her foot on the step,
then he pulled a blanket up to his chin
and slumbered by fits and starts. In the kitchen,
the curtains, saturated with steam,
adhered to the window and slowly froze.

Grassroots Extremism

The Religious Right

by Wayne Allensworth



“**E**xtremist” is a word that may conjure up images of hooded Klansmen crowded around a burning cross or of Black Panther separatists or kooky 60’s “revolutionaries.” Or perhaps images of Hitler, Stalin, or Mao come to mind. There is a supposition that those who are commonly called “extremists” are unreasonable, irrational, perhaps crazy, and quite possibly dangerous. In the brutal battles of the culture war, the word has become a weapon against which there is no defense, particularly when it is coupled with poisonous adjectives like “fundamentalist” or “religious” or “right-wing.” The ruling elite, ensconced in the nation’s cultural, educational, and political institutions, has decided that anyone who resists the steady attack on American and Western cultural norms is “extreme” and that only “moderates,” those who wish merely to slow the rate of erosion while accepting in large part the premises of their erstwhile opponents, are acceptable as players in the public arena. More ominously, the ruling elite has displayed a growing willingness to call on the muscle of the state apparatus to suppress, and even to kill, “extremists,” who have displayed an “irrational” (and one may say traditionally American) tendency to resist the encroachment of the state on what were once commonly considered the prerogatives of communities, families, and individuals.

Republicans were celebrating in November 1993. George Allen had become the first Republican elected governor of the state of Virginia in 16 years, defeating his Democratic opponent, Mary Sue Terry, by 17 percentage points. Republican

Wayne Allensworth writes from Purcellville, Virginia.

James Gilmore was elected Attorney General, and statewide the Republicans did quite well, gaining a substantial number of seats in the House of Delegates. Allen and Gilmore had campaigned on a law-and-order platform, calling for the abolition of parole, as well as opposing further gun control measures. Allen supports parental notification for underage girls seeking abortions and opposes a tax increase to shore up the state’s budget. There was certainly cause for rank-and-file Republicans to celebrate, but for small “r” republicans the real story in this campaign was Mike Farris, who was defeated in his bid to unseat incumbent Lieutenant Governor Don Beyer, a liberal Democrat.

Farris, a fundamentalist Christian, one-time Pat Robertson supporter, and former Moral Majority activist, is a lawyer who heads the Home Schooling Legal Defense Association; his own nine children are schooled at home, and Farris has acted as legal counsel for parents in disputes with school officials. In one case, Farris represented a group of Tennessee fundamentalists who wanted to have their children excused from reading certain books that they deemed offensive to their religious convictions. This in itself was probably enough to knot up the innards of professional do-gooders, who are all for protecting the rights of, or even inventing “rights” for, worthy victim groups but who cannot imagine that Middle Americans, particularly religious believers, have any rights at all.

But the clincher for the nattering nincompoops of respectable opinion was the fact that Farris openly attacked the state’s monopoly on education, that he called the public school system “a Godless monstrosity” and even questioned whether

public schools, that is state-run schools, were “necessary for the preservation of democracy.” (Did George Washington attend public schools?) And so the attacks started. Farris wanted to ban books. Farris wanted to “destroy” public schools. (Farris, in fact, wanted to decentralize the state school system, moving power from the state bureaucracy to locally elected school boards, which are now manned by appointment. Besides, how could public schools get much worse?) He wanted to use “public” funds (the “public” is an abstraction to liberals) to finance private schools (Farris supports a school-voucher program for Virginia). Farris was depicted as a religious fanatic (he is against “choice for women”), a disciple of Pat Robertson (who was himself portrayed in ads as a glowering Ayatollah) who would become “their lieutenant,” who is an agent for the “religious right,” who probably takes orders directly from Robertson headquarters. Furthermore, Farris planned to “impose” his views on others. The smear campaign was broadened to include Allen and Gilmore, since both men had also been endorsed by the hateful Pat Robertson and were thus seen as having fallen under the sway of “extremism,” but Farris remained the target of choice.

Farris was kept at arm’s length by establishment Republicans like the cowardly Senator John Warner (who has recently endorsed the candidacy of Independent Marshall Coleman over his fellow Republican Oliver North), who supported Allen and Gilmore, and various Virginia “moderates,” who were still stinging from their defeat at the State Republican Convention in May 1993. Some Republicans campaigned openly for Beyer, the Democrat, and the national party organization was conspicuously slow in delivering much-needed campaign funds to both Allen and Farris. Pat Buchanan held a fund-raiser for Farris. William Bennett, to his credit, was among the few Establishment figures to campaign for him.

But the most conspicuous Farris supporters were ordinary people, people who may never before have taken part in a political campaign or contributed to any candidate, people who were only lately galvanized by the all-out assault on the traditional family now gaining steam under the Clinton regime, the same crowd of religious fundamentalists, homeschoolers, red necks, traditionalist conservatives, and rural flotsam, black and white, who had taken the Republican State Convention by storm. The Farris campaign was a true grassroots movement, manned by the shock troops of a steadily growing groundswell of what may be the coming tidal wave of revolt. The people who manned the barricades for Mike Farris have their counterparts elsewhere: in Colorado, where the public was mobilized by a car salesman to stop the homosexual takeover; in the homeschooling movement everywhere; in the conservative and fundamentalist congregations across the country who are building an alternative to corrupt and secularized churches; and in their own state of Virginia, where petition organizers were able to place a proposition for elected school boards on the ballot in many localities. It is these people who have galled the sensitive hindquarters of the Establishment Brahmins, Republican and Democratic, most of all. After all, if the great unwashed take over the political “process,” where will the professional manipulators go?

The Farris campaign in Virginia was just the warm-up for the “religious right.” Since then, similar grassroots campaigns have yielded victories for insurgent conservatives in Texas, Minnesota, and Iowa. According to the usual suspects, these victories in convention and platform battles amount to the

forcible invasion and seizure of sacred political turf by the infidels of the “religious right,” people who have no business dabbling in politics, presumably a field of action open only to anointed liberals and those “moderates” who play the role of Pancho to the left’s Cisco. During the Farris campaign, the Republican Party Panchos had been given fair warning by their betters in the liberal Establishment as to what kind of press the GOP would get in the event of a hostile takeover by the unsavory mutants of the “far right.” The nomination of Ollie North by the Virginia Republican Convention marked the beginning of a nationwide smear campaign against the Republican intraparty insurgency.

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The Anti-Defamation League, following the lead of the Democratic agitprop peddlers in Virginia, decided to engage in a bit of defamation of its own this summer, releasing a report entitled “The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance and Pluralism in America,” which characterized the objects of its calumny as “prophets of rage” and accused them of harboring anti-Semitic sympathies, apparently because of their fervent Christianity, since real evidence of such inclination appears slim indeed. (The Reverend Donald Wildmon was attacked for “Jew-baiting” because he was bold enough to suggest that Hollywood films are commonly anti-Christian; this was apparently, in the eyes of the ADL, a coded reference to the prominent role Jews play in the film industry and therefore proof of anti-Semitism.)

Governor Ann Richards of Texas and California Representative Vic Fazio weighed in. Richards (a woman who I am ashamed to say is the chief executive of my native state) repeated the by-now tired refrain of charges concerning fundamentalist Christians’ plots to “force [their] beliefs on others,” while Fazio claimed that the GOP was being “forced to the fringes by the aggressive political tactics of the religious right.”

Sidney Blumenthal, writing in the July 18 edition of the *New Yorker*, fired one more warning round at Republican “moderates,” directing his wrath at the hapless Bob Dole, a late and reluctant convert to the North cause in Virginia. “How far,” wondered Blumenthal, “will their [religious right] crusade go” if

normally moderate “leaders” such as Senator Dole are “falling in step”? Senator Dole is now presumably pondering the fate of his own valued respectability, the hint having been dropped.

So far, the campaign against the Christian right insurgency has appeared only to strengthen the resolve of the rebels, and even the party establishment has felt compelled to voice some protest over the hysterical reaction of the country’s cultural and political elite to the insurgents’ victories. What remains to be seen is whether the attacks will have the desired effect on the voters this November. Last year’s Farris campaign may be instructive on that score.

The conventional wisdom is that Farris won a moral victory. Despite the propaganda and the enormous amount of time Farris had to spend defending himself, as well as the relatively shallow pockets of his campaign and the fact that he was a first-time candidate, he was able to garner 46 percent of the vote to Beyer’s 54 percent and to pick up more total votes than well-known politician Mary Sue Terry did in her losing gubernatorial bid. That is all to the good, and the Farris organization is already gearing up for the 1996 Senate campaign.

But some Farris supporters noted that the smear campaign worked. Beyer *did* win, and the general Republican sweep means that a substantial number of voters split their tickets. Some of the same people who supported antigun control, law-and-order, pro-life, antitax, pro-“family values” candidates all over the state rejected the most authentic, grassroots non-politician in the race. The disturbing answer as to why so many voters rejected Mike Farris, who ran on a platform so similar to that of Allen and Gilmore, and voted for an Establishment, pro-abortion, big-spending liberal is that Mike Farris’s open, honest Christianity, his defense of homeschooling, and his direct connections to Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell were taken as proof by some voters that Farris really is an “extremist” who wants to “impose” his will on others.

How this imposition was to work is anybody’s guess (a homeschooling gestapo, perhaps?), and how Farris was to accomplish his will in the relatively limited confines of the office of lieutenant governor remains a mystery. As far as force is concerned, just what is it that liberal policies demand but a coercive megastate, one which will extract ever larger tax “contributions” in its efforts to impose broader and deeper controls on society, whether it be gun control, school busing, affirmative action, forced acceptance of “alternative lifestyles,” abortion on demand, or the assault on traditional families that is the “children’s rights” agenda? Mike Farris’s small “r” republicanism would return questions of childrearing to the family; it would decentralize decision-making to the lowest level; in short, it is the living memory of the principles and values of our forebears, a philosophy that embraces local and regional differences as normal and healthy. All the liberal talk of “diversity” is positively Orwellian, since liberal programs demand centralization and standardization. That this may be news to a substantial part of the electorate in the same state that gave us men like Thomas Jefferson and John Randolph is no cause for rejoicing over moral victories. If a candidate like Mike Farris were ever able to communicate that message to voters, honest people who buy into some liberal value judgments just might see that he is no threat to them, unless they fear and loathe their neighbors, which liberal hard-liners probably do.

What differentiates Mike Farris from the usual run of Christian right candidates is precisely his ability to articulate a pro-

gram that is usually only implied, a program that, in a certain sense, is radical, in that it opposes a trend toward statism in Western societies that predates the founding of our Republic. What Mike Farris opposes is the absorption by the state of functions that once gave substance and significance to institutions like the family, church, and school and that thereby provided the needed social glue to hold communities together by conveying a sense of belonging, purpose, and certainty to their members, something modern statist systems conspicuously fail to do. The modern state reacts to the social decay it does so much to foster—whether it be soaring levels of illegitimacy, widespread drug use, falling SAT scores, or skyrocketing crime rates—by spawning programs that further expand its own power at the expense of autonomous communities and institutions, absorbing more of their functions, and detaching people further from the associations that give their lives direction and meaning; it “liberates” the individual from the oppressive bonds of family, church, and community and, under its own benevolent tutelage, fosters his self-realization.



What Farris and his followers are resisting is the loss of control over their own destiny, which is increasingly determined by authorities both distant from them and remote from their experiences. It remains to be seen whether he, or anyone who supports him, realizes that his ideas could very well be the key to broadening the Christian right’s appeal, tying it to grassroots movements across the nation, and possibly forging a new alliance that could mount serious opposition to those who wish to turn over our families’, and our nation’s, destiny to a centralizing elite, whether it be a Washington bureaucracy or the World Trade Organization, the Department of Health and Human Services or the United Nations. That is exactly why candidates like Mike Farris represent such a danger to Establishment politicians, both Republican and Democratic, who depend in large part on the liberal cultural, educational, and political elite for their own legitimacy and on political centralization as the basis of their power. If such candidates stray too far, they are sure to be branded as “extremist,” or worse.

In an era when the American public by and large sees nothing wrong in the slaughter of the Branch Davidians, the assault on Randy Weaver and his family, or, for that matter, the Virginia Democrats’ partially successful attempt to suppress by court injunction an election guide they deemed pro-Republican, the successful smearing of Mike Farris should give us pause. The parameters of the “extremist” label are wide when to resist an unwarranted assault by federal agents is considered “extreme,” wider still when defending one’s family by force is deemed “extreme,” and frighteningly expansive when even to reject liberal orthodoxy and resist the tentacles of the ever-expanding total state is seen as “extreme.” If Mike Farris is dangerous in the eyes of the political elites and a substantial portion of the general population, how long will it be before we are treated to a dramatic story of a heroic assault by the combined forces of the FBI and the Department of Education on the homeschooling “cult” compound in northern Virginia? The struggle is just beginning. ©

Rothbard Against the Dismalists

by Justin Raimondo

"Wisdom is neither inheritance nor legacy."

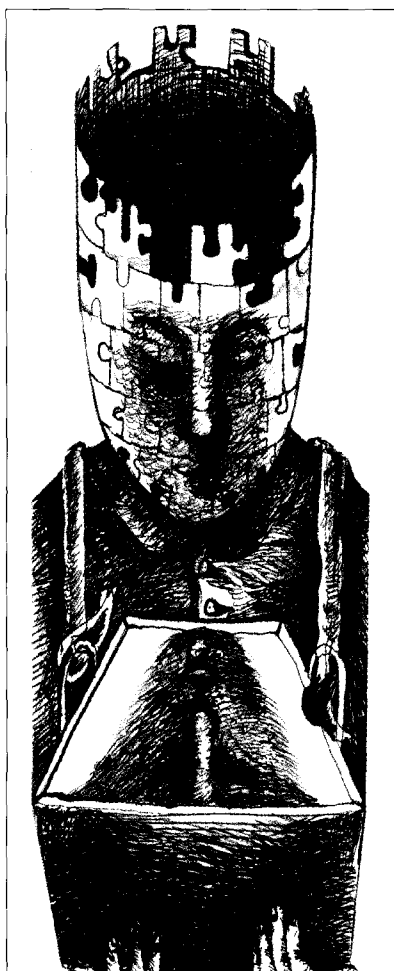
—Thomas Fuller

Man, Economy, and State: A Treatise on Economic Principles
by Murray N. Rothbard
Auburn, Alabama: Ludwig von Mises
Institute; 987 pp., \$25.00

In his keynote speech to a meeting of the John Randolph Club, Murray N. Rothbard exhorted his colleagues to take up the task he sees as central to the success of their movement: nothing less than the repeal of the 20th century. The publication of a new edition of Rothbard's *Man, Economy, and State* underscores the author's hostility to modernity.

As is apparent from the opening pages of this monumental work, they don't write 'em like *this* anymore. In the present day and age, economists, as a rule, rarely bother with writing books. Today, the frontiers of economic knowledge are explored in the pages of specialized academic journals and in brief, highly technical articles and notes. In a field that really ought to be "English only," the language of this priesthood of specialists is abstract mathematics. Inscrutable to outsiders, the literature of modern economics is read only by those fellow specialists who inhabit a particular subfield. Like every other field of human knowledge, economics is fractured into numerous subcategories, none of which appears to have much connection with the other. Thus it is possible, in this Wonderland we live in, for a distin-

Justin Raimondo is the author of *Reclaiming the American Right: The Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement* (Center for Libertarian Studies).



guished scholar in the field to know *everything* about the wage patterns of 19th-century Appalachian coal miners and *nothing* about the most basic principles of economics. Incredibly, with the exception of textbooks for undergraduates, very little discussion of economic theory and empirical work is written in English.

The sheer breathtaking scope of Rothbard's vision is enough to spark an idealist's interest in the "dismal" science. Here is economics for living, breathing human beings; not statistics, computer models, and arcane mathematical sym-

bols. First published in 1962, *Man, Economy, and State* is something very different from the narrow worm's-eye view of the field afforded by modern economics texts: a systematic treatise, a comprehensive synthesis of economic thought, a majestic overview of basic principles and their application. Except for Ludwig von Mises' monumental *Human Action* (1949), Rothbard's book is the only such treatise published since the early 20th century, when the "principles" book was the standard form in which economists presented their ideas. Designed to be accessible to any interested reader, and presupposing no formal training in economics, mathematics, or statistics, the book covers nearly all of basic economic theory, from barter and indirect exchange to competition and monopoly, public expenditures, money and interest, and inflation and the business cycle.

As the heir and champion of the great Ludwig von Mises, Rothbard is the leading figure in the so-called "Austrian" School of economics. Founded in the 1870's by the Viennese economist Carl Menger and his successors, the Austrians emphasize the human aspect of economic behavior. This reverses the modern trend, which reduces human beings to a series of numbers in some planner's grand design. The economists of the 20th century, always eager to appear "scientific" and up-to-date, adopted the outlook and methods of experimental physics. The Austrians, in contrast, maintain that the social sciences, and economics in particular, require a method closer to logic. Thus, Austrians favor verbal reasoning over mathematics, causal explanations over formal descriptions of "equilibrium," and an emphasis on the subjective nature of economic

decisions and knowledge. They also tend to be strong advocates of laissez-faire capitalism, even more so than members of the better-known Chicago School. Deriving the principles of economics from self-evident axioms, the Austrians see the free market not merely as the most efficient allocator of scarce resources, but, more importantly, as part of the natural order of things.

Given the popularity of the pragmatic-empiricist Chicagoites among establishment conservatives, it is easy to see why, even with the political and moral collapse of socialism, the free market is nowhere in sight; who, after all, is willing to go to the barricades for an empirical study? But men have laid, and will lay, down their lives for what they believe to be the natural order, especially if they see it violated by government on a daily basis. Rothbard is a breath of fresh air for all those who are looking not for policy-wonk cost-benefit analyses and arguments for "efficiency," but for a philosophy of the social sciences, of which economics is but one branch.

It is impossible in a review to do justice to the scope and depth of the book's contents. Among the author's original contributions are a treatment of the theory of interest as integrated into the theory of the firm (in Chapter 7) and a discussion of monopoly (in Chapter 10) in which Rothbard demolishes the concept of a free-market monopoly and proves that no one can maintain a stranglehold on the economic life of a nation unless it is enforced at gunpoint, *i.e.*, by the government. This volume is a gold mine of numerous insights and observations on topics ranging from business organization and comparative economic systems to legal philosophy, history, and psychology.

In addition to presenting a general theory of economics itself, the author rebuts numerous fallacies and misinterpretations, including most of the common policy prescriptions of the time. Since this book is a reprint of the earlier edition, his discussion covers only those fallacies that were around as of 1962. The last 30 years have spawned many more, and it would have been nice to have an updated edition, but this is a minor quibble. Out of print since the early 1970's, *Man, Economy, and State* is the necessary antidote to the nonsense that passes for economics these days, an indispensable weapon in the battle against the redistributionist schemes of the Washington power elite.

The significance of this work is tied up with its history, and so you should know that *Man, Economy, and State* was originally published as part of a series sponsored by the now-defunct William Volker Fund, which also funded Mises' salary at New York University, as well as part of Hayek's at the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. The Volker series also included Mises' *Epistemological Problems of Economics* and Israel Kirzner's first book, *The Economic Point of View*. Rothbard worked as a full-time analyst for the Volker Fund, tracking down the few free market-libertarian scholars that existed and making it possible for them to continue and expand their work. The fund was the main link in the network of Old Right economists, who were never for a moment reconciled to the welfare-warfare state, and its collapse was due in part to the crisis that occurred in the conservative movement of the 1950's. The fund was, in large part, a casualty of the struggle between the Old Right

and the New and the breakup of the conservative-libertarian alliance over the issue of the Cold War. With the Volker Fund's demise, the hard-core free-market analysis of economic thought represented by the Austrian School was largely absent from the ranks of the conservative establishment; the incursions of neoconservative pragmatists and ex-Marxist social scientists who envisioned a "conservative welfare state," as Irving Kristol puts it, thus met with little resistance in the councils of the right. The publication of this new edition of *Man, Economy, and State* therefore comes at just the right time. As libertarians and conservatives rediscover their common Old Right heritage and cast aside Kempian nostrums of neoconservative welfare statism, this book will do much to instruct a new generation of conservative activists who understand that knowledge is the prerequisite for activism.

The author of 20 books and more than 1,000 articles, Murray N. Rothbard has been a mentor and an inspiration to the partisans of liberty since the early 1950's. If he had written only *Man, Economy, and State*, it would have been enough to secure him a permanent place among the luminaries of libertarian thought. As it is, the astonishing range of his writings, from economics to ethics to history to political journalism, reveals the mind of a polymath, so unlike the modern intellectual's narrowness of vision that the two seem representative of different species. He is comfortable everywhere, and just as capable of turning out a knock 'em-sock 'em political polemic as of writing the magisterial *Man, Economy, and State*. In true Rothbardian style, his two current projects are a forthcoming multivolume history of economic thought and a monthly journal of ideological fireworks, the *Rothbard-Rockwell Report*, which regularly lights up the sky with its blazing indictment of Clintonian socialism.

Murray Rothbard, the happy scholar-warrior of liberty, is a national treasure. If ever the people take back their country and their culture from the treasonous, decadent elite, a statue in his honor will be erected on the spot where the Federal Reserve Bank (or perhaps the Internal Revenue Service) once stood. There, amid the wreckage of the Leviathan, the newly freed slaves will gather and silently give thanks.

<C

LIBERAL ARTS

REFLECTIONS

Equalitarianism equals equality among nonequals; equality among equals equals political incorrectness.

Human rights are not expensive, because they come duty-free.

I have seen humans without rights and then rights without humans.

—Alexander Badin

The Cosmopolitan Temptation

by Paul Gottfried

The Emerging Atlantic Culture

by Thomas Molnar

New Brunswick: Transaction;

113 pp., \$27.95

Blood and Belonging: Journeys Into the New Nationalism

by Michael Ignatieff

New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux;

263 pp., \$21.00



The two books reviewed here provide a contrast both in style and in substance. Whereas Thomas Molnar treats utopians and historical optimists with exuberant contempt, Michael Ignatieff bewails the fact that nations and nationalism have not yet disappeared. Molnar is proud of his relentless realism, in which politics are related to man's fallen state; Ignatieff, by contrast, wants us to move beyond the past toward a world without national loyalties. Despite these differences, both men succinctly set forth their positions, resting their arguments on bold generalities and arresting illustrations. Ignatieff, who prepared his book for a BBC series aired in 1993, is clearly aiming his remarks at a *bien pensant* liberal audience, one that wishes to be told that its own sentiments, albeit currently impractical, are admirable. One respects that Molnar has in mind his own particular readership, perhaps those who, like myself, have read him over the years and value his opinions.

I must insist that Molnar is of the two the far more intelligent commentator, even when his prejudices come to the surface. And he does have prejudices—against Protestantism, the American founding, and commercial societies—that detract from his otherwise sober analysis of American institutions and culture. He tries to explain all the lunacies in contemporary American life by too often going back to the Protestant Reformation or to Ernst Troeltsch's turn-of-the-century views about cultural

Protestantism. Like other European commentators on America, Molnar is also overly dependent on Alexis de Tocqueville. Indeed, he seems to believe that the investigation of American small-town democracy done by a visiting French aristocrat in the 1830's can serve to illuminate Bill Clinton's America. But Tocqueville is more useful for his critical reflections on Jacksonian democracy than in disclosing a supposedly unchanging American character. Like Samuel Francis and Forrest McDonald, but unlike Molnar, I am far more struck by the political and cultural gulf between early and present-day America than by any presumed continuity between them. I cannot recognize in the multicultural, therapeutic America of the present the Protestant Republic of 1835. Tocqueville might as well have been describing the Egyptian Middle Kingdom, for all the relevance that the America he visited has to our own.

Despite the Catholic and Tocquevilian filters that he applies, Molnar does perceive certain things very clearly. The culture that arose on both sides of the Atlantic in the wake of American political hegemony following World War II is far more brittle, he reminds us, than is often imagined. Europeans took over American political slogans and paid at least lip service to "American values" like democracy, pluralism, and equality because shattered Europe respected American power. Unlike naive American globalists, Molnar is brutally honest in exposing the shallowness of European enthusiasm for American control. He is also too much of a historicist to attribute transcendent importance to the ideological accoutrements of power. There is nothing intrinsically moral, he observes, about whatever political system the United States enjoys at any particular time and decides to impose on dependent governments. When asked by an earnest disciple of Harry Jaffa whether he believed that American democracy is the only true Judeo-Christian regime, Molnar looked at the young man as if he were insane.

American liberal democracy, he insists, is incompatible with strongly corporate societies that value group identity more than individual expressiveness. Its success depends on social and

cultural transformation that is still less advanced in most of Europe than in the United States. Europeans also distinguish between culture and technical civilization, and both their left- and their right-wing critics mock American materialism, in contrast to Europe's centuries-old artistic achievements. Moreover, most Americans have no sympathetic interest in the European past. It is what their forefathers left behind or, in the cases of Asians and blacks, never possessed in the first place. American interest in Europe, Molnar explains, is typically confined to a concern with whether the Europeans are coming to resemble us. Presumably, the more they do resemble us, the less reason we have to feel threatened when we encounter people on the other side of the Atlantic.

These observations are right on the money, and the most fatuous remarks in Ignatieff's lament for internationalism confirm Molnar's insensitively stated truths. The Canadian-born and educated Ignatieff weeps over what he supposes to be the temporary eclipse of his vision of progress, of what he calls "cosmopolitanism" sweeping across the globe: "Twentieth-century democracy and unprecedented post-war prosperity have extended the privileges of cosmopolitanism from a small white male moneyed elite to a substantial minority of the population of the nation-states of the developed world." Ignatieff praises the revolutions in transportation and communication and the overthrow of authoritarian structures like the Habsburg and Turkish empires in preparing the way for this new cosmopolitanism. In the world of his imagination, there would exist only individuals interacting without ethnic or sexual distinctions or any hint of discrimination. This is not coming to pass, Ignatieff explains, because a new (really old) nationalism has surged up in Europe and elsewhere. Ignatieff's banal, politically correct treatment of this subject winds on for so long that it almost turned me from my ancestral Austrophilia into a Serbian nationalist. And though sympathetic to the Whites against the Reds, I find it hard to sympathize with Ignatieff's Russian *émigré* family, in view of the ideas he ascribes to them. After all, there are less appetizing miscreants than communists,

starting with frenzied “cosmopolitan” journalists.

Ignatieff's book also substantiates a generalization that Murray Rothbard and I have been testing for years: that all left-liberals are obsessive Teutonophobes. Ignatieff hates Imperial Germany, which he intemperately attacks in a discussion of German and other nationalisms. In 1913, the German imperial government erected a monument commemorating the victory of several German states over Napoleon at Leipzig in 1813. This, for Ignatieff, shows the inevitability of Hitler's victory in 1933: “The entire erotic paraphernalia of Nazi appeal is already there in the Leipzig monument: the same helmets, the same snakes, the same Teutonic ardor, the same ludicrous cult of masculine harness; the same erotically charged confusion about nature—is it to be a life-giving force or carnal malignity?” As hysterical as these passages sound, they are shockingly typical of Ignatieff's digressions into German history. They also reveal the contemporary American media view of unsubdued aspects of European life. Whatever there is in it that cannot be assimilated to here-and-now American values and sensitivities is essentially evil—and should be seen as such.

All over America there are commemorative monuments, many of them grimmer than the German statue that offends Ignatieff. Yet these monuments are not supposed to give offense, inasmuch as they can be seen to presage the eventual victory of American pluralism and democratic cosmopolitanism. Molnar is right to protest against the ugly American tendency, of relatively recent appearance, to ascribe diabolical motives to the national sentiments and memories of those who stood—or stand—in the way of the imperial projects of our political class. Since the American Empire, as opposed to the American Republic, represents cosmopolitanism, anyone who resists that empire must be crazed or evil. And the most aberrant nationalists, following this tortured logic, were those who opposed or were opposed by Wilson's crusade to make the world safe for democracy.

None of this criticism is intended to gainsay the vicious and savage face that contemporary nationalism often exhibits. On this point, unfortunately, Ignatieff is correct. What he fails to note, however, is that cosmopolitans in the 20th century have been at least as mis-

chievous as nationalists; reveling in control and reconstruction, they will not leave others alone. The Bolsheviks who persecuted Ignatieff's family claimed to be internationalists. Ignatieff may object that his internationalism is more benign than the coercive kind preached by Trotsky and Lenin. Undoubtedly he would like to think so, but the question does arise: Exactly how far would he go to impose his own vision? Since the world as it now exists with its divisiveness and distinctions infuriates him, what would he do to ensure the nondiscriminatory, globalist society he invokes at the beginning of his book? And what would he inflict upon those who resist his plan? I suspect that what he has in mind is a more ambitious version of the American therapeutic state, but one that would make special provisions for still-unadjusted nationalities. In any case, I would prefer to live in Thomas Molnar's fallen world than in the perfected one envisaged by Michael Ignatieff.

Paul Gottfried is a professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania.

Race Matters

by *Brenan R. Nierman*

The Tyranny of the Majority: Fundamental Fairness in Representative Democracy

by *Lani Guinier*

New York: *The Free Press*;
324 pp., \$24.95



This book is either irrefutable evidence against a multicultural society or the last-ditch plea of someone who is very concerned with the problems posed by multiculturalism but who wants to make a go of it nevertheless. It may well be both.

Lani Guinier's essays ask how far democracy must go to accommodate itself to groups that perceive themselves as a permanent minority. Consequently, the ghost of the greatest American statesman of the 19th century, John C. Calhoun, hovers over these pages; yet Calhoun is not alluded to once in the entire volume. One reason for this may

be that Lani Guinier is—at least she claims to be—a democrat, while Calhoun was a republican through and through. Another may be the very different interests for which they speak. But Calhoun's absence, given Guinier's concerns, is strange nonetheless.

An ever-present theme in Guinier's book—that race continues to matter in American life—is something that virtually everyone acknowledges in private but seldom addresses in public. This is not surprising. Race all too frequently overlaps cultural considerations, and this means that anyone short of the abstract zombies one finds in the writings of John Rawls (and John Locke) considers it in his calculations of such things as where to live, where to take his recreation, and where to send his children to school. Lani Guinier knows this. She also knows that, all too often for her tastes, black Americans come out on the short end of the stick. This is the situation she wants to change. But her analysis of the present system and its shortcomings suggests yet one more piece of evidence for the claim that multicultural America is not working; indeed, it is falling apart. We must ask whether the solution to this dilemma is, as Professor Guinier would give us, what she calls more democracy.

The fathers of the United States, through the framing of the Constitution in 1787, created a constitutional republic, drawing upon their knowledge of the dualism implicit in human nature and eschewing a plebiscitary democracy. Such things bear remembering. For in constituting the nation in this way, our fathers rejected the view that man is intrinsically good and that all he needs for self-government is a voice in the legislature. This latter view, which is found in the work and disciples of Jean Jacques Rousseau, finds exposition in the long line of American panderers to that abstraction “The People.” We find it in the worst aspects of Jefferson's thought, the whole political career of Andrew Jackson, the impious blathering of Abraham Lincoln, and later on as an almost-literal article of faith for the Progressive movement and one of its favorite sons, Professor Woodrow Wilson. Government by sentimental impulse picks up the pace with the New and Fair deals and really takes off with the New Frontier, the civil rights movement, and the Great Society. Throughout this parade of naiveté, participation in the public

trust is equated with wise governance, and ignorance is masked by the universal circus into which this kind of politics degenerates.

Lani Guinier places herself in this grand tradition, and at the same time, by republishing an article that calls certain aspects of this legacy into question, confuses us as to her purposes. On June 4, 1993, upon the withdrawal of her name for consideration for the position of Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, she said, "I have always believed in one person, one vote," and denied having written anything inconsistent with that principle. But in her essay "Groups, Representation, and Race-Conscious Districting," we read that "the heavy reliance on one-person, one-vote jurisprudence to develop a theory of democracy fails both as a theory and as an adequate doctrinal protection of either individual or group rights." This in the course of laying the groundwork for her argument that a "one vote-one value" system should be adopted in order to "achieve political equality and political fairness." Guinier's goal in this context, she says, is to make voting "a positive-sum experience in which all voters actively participate in selecting their representative." One of the ways she suggests we go about this "reform" is by adopting a "cumulative voting" system, letting all voters on local and state levels distribute a number of votes among various alternatives as they see fit. By forming coalitions and clustering votes, then, groups with strong enough and specific interests in a particular political outcome would be able to have at least a partial say in determining policy and laws. Lani Guinier seeks "equal opportunity to influence legislative outcomes regardless of race."

These arguments are based upon a conviction that different ethnic groups in the United States have a definite sense of cohesiveness and that, for minorities, this sense of belonging becomes frustrating when, at the polls, they constantly find themselves outvoted. Representation "within territorial districts is implicitly about representation of group interests, not just individual access. However, the future of such group representation—like the future of the group itself—lies less inside geographic boundaries and more within the cultural and political community forged by group consciousness and group identity. Empowerment for a group as well as for an individual comes from an active asser-

tion of self-defined interests. A group is represented where it has the opportunity to speak out and not just to be spoken for."

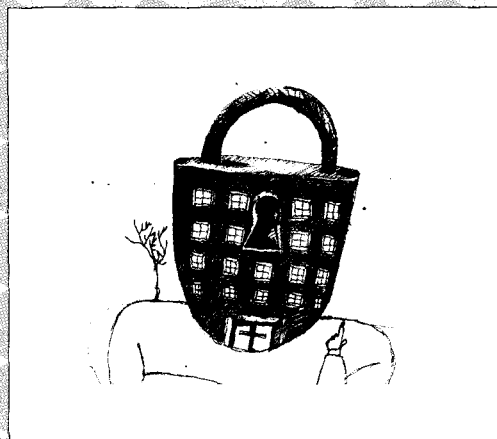
These are legitimate concerns. Most significant of all, the sociological foundation for these concerns is a far more accurate depiction of American life as it is lived and experienced than the democratic globaloney abstractions that the heirs of Father Abraham and the Logothete Woodrow would have us accept as faith. Guinier's concerns bring out, and bring out well, one side of the racial divide that is balkanizing America into little Bosnias. For her efforts to suggest some ways in which a sense of comity within the body politic can be reached, and people allowed a voice, Lani Guinier should have been commended, not lynched, in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal*. Her nomination forced the problem of race in the United States to the front of public debate for a brief moment; and that moment, coming as it

did in the wake of the L.A. riots and the canonization of "motorist" Rodney King, was more than America could take.

There should be no mistaking the direction in which Lani Guinier in Janet Reno's Justice Department would have taken America. For Guinier is not only a statist, but a statist with a moral mission. Her work is difficult to evaluate precisely because it advocates sensible procedures to allow for a greater degree of political participation and inclusion, while imposing the mechanism for establishing this on an already malfunctioning system. For if anyone has a system that is designed to rake in the boodle for them, it is the current holders of official victim status in these United States.

All of which makes Lani Guinier's fundamental complaint more confusing, since it has been largely to satisfy persons like herself, namely Puritans in the pursuit of collective virtue, that we have come to this epoch in our national life.

LIBERAL ARTS



FAITH AND FAIR HOUSING

Landlords in Provo, Utah, who rent apartments only to Brigham Young University students are discriminating against non-Mormons in violation of the federal Fair Housing Act, ACLU lawyers charged in a lawsuit filed last summer in Salt Lake City's U.S. District Court. By conforming with BYU's off-campus housing policy, which strictly segregates male and female tenants, the landlords are also discriminating on the basis of gender and family status, the complaint charged.

Mark Wilson, age 20, and Anne Walker, age 18, filed the suit against 12 defendants, reported the *Salt Lake Tribune*. Both Wilson and Walker were recently denied housing because they are not BYU students; both charge that, since 99 percent of BYU students are Mormon, their exclusion is effectively religious discrimination.

It seems that Professor Guinier's fundamental point of contention is that the present system of governance is unfair: unfair not because we do not elect enough blacks to elective office, but because blacks do not get what they want when it comes time to consider what does and does not get passed as legislation. This is the point she emphasizes, time and again, through the turgid legal prose in which so much of this book is written.

One gets the strong impression that, in her dismissal of what is generally perceived to have been the Reagan agenda on civil rights matters, Professor Guinier is less concerned with the individual virtues and decentralized power that support self-government than she is with making sure that the people on whose behalf she thinks she speaks get their piece of the action. She thereby indicates that much of the classical concerns of government, namely the preservation of a framework of liberty and federalism within which virtue may be pursued and the highest aspirations of human existence accomplished, are not fundamentally of any great interest to her. Such can be inferred from her cavalier dismissal of the case made by the Reagan administration against one of her most cherished goals, which is to hold the line against federal retrenchment in the sphere of civil rights, a sphere in which so many "gains" have been made in recent decades.

Thus, in the course of this book, one is finally forced to ask whether Lani Guinier and those who share her concerns have been reading the same newspapers and experiencing the same history as the rest of us these past 30 years. For, far from having seen the officially designated oppressed classes among us receive the short end of the stick, we have witnessed an era in which being "oppressed" has become a lucrative business. In the name of civil rights, our property rights have been invaded, our right to speak freely and truthfully infringed, merit has been discarded for appearance, and law itself has been made the servant of power-maximizing politicians who would prosecute policemen for doing their job while letting the barbarians who infest our streets run free. Headlines to the contrary, Guinier is no "quota queen"; her work seeks to go beyond the present order of things. It seems clear, however, that she thinks the present system is an improvement on

the way things were. That she could arrive at a conclusion so different from that of most of the readers of this journal, and indeed most of America, is not reason to celebrate our diversity. It is, on the contrary, yet another "firebell in the night" heralding the balkanization of America, a development that, if unchecked, will yet vindicate Stephen Douglas's prophecies as to where Mr. Lincoln's theorizing would lead us.

Brenan R. Niernan is a lecturer in the department of public and international affairs at George Mason University.

A Child of the Revolution

by Mark G. Malvasi

John C. Calhoun: A Biography

by Irving H. Bartlett

New York: W.W. Norton;

320 pp., \$25.00



In his engaging biography of John C. Calhoun, Irving H. Bartlett reminds us that American political culture and the men who made it were not always as decadent and corrupt as they are today. Yet Bartlett's book is not a partisan manifesto. He is respectful of Calhoun but not always sympathetic to his views, aspirations, and achievements.

One of Bartlett's most important and original contributions is to show that Calhoun was not *sui generis* but was, instead, the product of his culture. Calhoun was born into the conservative but volatile society of the South Carolina backcountry in 1782. His father, Patrick Calhoun, although he died when John was a boy of 13, exercised a remarkable influence on his son's temperament and worldview. A stern Scots-Irish Presbyterian, Patrick Calhoun taught his children that life is a perpetual struggle against evil. He also instilled in them an abiding love of liberty and an unqualified hatred of tyranny. For Patrick Calhoun, the obligations to God, family, neighborhood, and country defined the parameters of private and public life. John C. Calhoun fully absorbed his father's convictions, preferring through-

out his life study, toil, and duty to frivolity, idleness, and self-indulgence.

Bartlett traces Calhoun's public life as a backcountry lawyer, state legislator, congressman, Vice President, senator, and Cabinet official. In examining Calhoun's private life, Bartlett shows that the image of the "cast-iron man," which has enjoyed remarkable durability among historians, utterly misrepresents his personality. Calhoun was a devoted son; an indulgent, even permissive, father; a dutiful, if somewhat remote, husband; and a conscientious planter and master of slaves.

Bartlett ably reviews Calhoun's enduring contributions to political philosophy, his effort to "place political science on the same solid foundations as physical science." But Bartlett's most subtle and important insights emerge from his exploration of the dichotomies that structured Calhoun's thought and career. Three themes, or more accurately three tensions, dominate the narrative: first, Calhoun's effort to reconcile nationalism and sectionalism; second, his struggle to balance ambition against principle; third, his defense of slavery and republicanism.

Like most other scholars of Jacksonian politics, Bartlett acknowledges the enthusiastic nationalism that characterized Calhoun's tenure in the House of Representatives. Upon entering Congress, Calhoun immediately identified himself with the "war hawks" who supported the conflict with Great Britain. After the War of 1812, Calhoun advocated internal improvements, favored a protective tariff, championed a national bank, and generally sought "to counteract every tendency to disunion."

During the 1820's, according to the familiar argument, Calhoun in response to the outcry raised in South Carolina against the tariff abandoned his early nationalism and embraced an ardent sectionalism. Bartlett does not posit such a sharp divergence between Calhoun's commitment to nation and to section. In Bartlett's view, Calhoun was first and last "a child of the Revolution." He revered the Union and his affection for it never wavered.

But Calhoun could not support a Union that had become oppressive. When the government of the United States passed to the control of men more interested in using power for their own benefit than in attending to the good of the commonwealth, Calhoun sought to

implement various mechanisms, nullification and the concurrent majority among them, to protect the rights and liberties of the minority section. Although he never abandoned his attachment to the Union, he maintained that his rivals had perverted it by transforming the government into an instrument of patronage.

Calhoun suffered to behold the nation abandoned to party hacks and spoilsmen. Only honorable, autonomous, and dispassionate gentlemen who were not prey to the intrigues or obsessions of the moment had the authority to rule. Never at ease with the mass politics that emerged during the first half of the 19th century, Calhoun himself found it impossible "to speak to the democratic spirit of the new age."

Steadfast in his fidelity to the Old Republic, Calhoun always proclaimed to act from the most noble motives, without consideration of political advantage. Bartlett maintains that Calhoun may have rationalized to his own satisfaction "the fiction that he remained above the political scramble." But he concludes that "it would be a mistake to take Calhoun at face value," since "he was no selfless knight in shining armor." Bartlett is doubtless correct that Calhoun at times acted to gratify his political ambition. But what politician does not? The real question is whether Calhoun was a political opportunist who sought to advance his career at the expense of the country. It seems to me that Calhoun sacrificed political ambition in defense of all that he cherished.

It would have been a simple matter for Calhoun to win the presidency, as his colleague Dixon Lewis of Alabama recognized, had he supported the popular war against Mexico. He refused to do so, arguing that the declaration of war had been unconstitutional. Even in victory, he was convinced that the war would bring disaster to the United States by requiring the imposition of a crushing debt, encouraging the centralization of power, necessitating the creation of a large standing army, and transforming a republic of free institutions into an empire bent on conquest. "Mexico is to us the forbidden fruit," he told his fellow senators. "The penalty of eating it would be to subject our institutions to political death."

Calhoun's defense of slavery, however essential for his political survival in the South, was also in the final analysis more

a matter of conviction than of expediency. Calhoun never questioned the natural inferiority of blacks and asserted, in unison with other pro-slavery theorists, that "there never yet has existed a wealthy and civilized society in which one portion of the community did not . . . live on the labor of the other." For Calhoun and his Southern contemporaries, however, domestic slavery humanized the exploitation of labor, imposing reciprocal obligations on masters and slaves. Southerners deplored the political, social, and moral, if not the material, consequences of industrialism and capitalism that exposed men, women, and children alike to brutality, degradation, and hopelessness. They believed that a society in which some men took personal responsibility for the welfare of others was the sole preserve of republican freedom and Christian morality. From Calhoun's point of view, whether the South stood or fell would determine the fate of the American Republic itself.

Calhoun did not live to witness the devastation of the South in the Civil War that he had warned against and had desperately sought to prevent. But he had seen enough by 1850 to know that the Old Republic in which he had come of age, and to which he owed whatever distinction he had earned, was swiftly pass-

ing into memory. He had, as Bartlett discerns, fought under the same banner as his father before him:

Calhoun knew that he was the son of a legend and had become a legend himself. Blessed with advantages of wealth and education far beyond anything his father possessed, he had tried to carry on his father's struggles in a new and rapidly changing world. Patrick's enemies were not his father's enemies . . . but in many ways the stakes were the same for father and son. With one foot always in the wilderness, the father had put his life on the line to carve civilization out of a brutal frontier. The son . . . put his character on the line to preserve the political principles that civilization had created.

So much more imperative is it now to reflect on the life, thought, and character of John C. Calhoun, when the Old Republic is virtually beyond remembering in this grim and unheroic age.

Mark G. Malvasi teaches history at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia.

LIBERAL ARTS



MAIL AND MULTICULTURALISM

The vice chairman of the United States Postal Service recently stated that blacks are over-represented among postal workers in major cities, often at the expense of Latinos. Tirso del Junco, who is himself Hispanic, said that postal service management in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami "is driven by blacks—they must open the doors of opportunity to everyone," reported the *Los Angeles Times* last summer.

Postal Service officials denied del Junco's accusations and argued that hiring is based on the results of a test open to anyone. "The managers do not control the hiring of employees—the register controls it," said Charly Amos, the "Postal Service Manager for Affirmative Action."

Reimagining a River

by Stephen Bodio

Gila: The Life and Death of an
American River

by Gregory McNamee

New York: Crown; 215 pp., \$24.00



In 1944, a party of German prisoners-of-war escaped from a camp in Phoenix, armed with old maps and with the intention of stealing a boat and sailing to Mexico. When they saw the “pitiful trickle” that is the modern Gila, they began to hike downstream in despair and were soon rounded up. Their leader later complained, “I only wish the Gila really had been a river. If it has no water, why do the Americans show it on their maps?” In the spirit of Edward Abbey (and with a few of his prejudices against such things as cows), Gregory McNamee goes a long way toward answering this question in his readable, but never shallow, history.

He begins in the first person, in the high 10,000-foot-plus headwaters of the river, the forests of southern New Mexico, during a vivid September thunderstorm, then casts back into geological history to when the Gila was a sea bottom, 150 million years ago. He passes rapidly, though not superficially,

through paleontology and slows down as humans arrive. His treatment of early Indian history seems comprehensive and taught me much I did not know. Entering upon the history of existing tribes, he takes for a chapter epigraph a haunting quote from an Apache elder that might stand for the whole book: “The land is always stalking people.”

His coverage of the conquest is fair. If it seems at times to be critical and perhaps a little politically correct, his documented account of the watershed is hard to dispute, and depressing. He does give occasional glimpses of another side; I found it fascinating that the Church in the 1600’s had declared, “He sins against Divine Providence who tries to improve what God, for inscrutable motives, has wished to leave imperfect,” and that it therefore disagreed with Father Kino’s public works projects. There is wit here, too; McNamee, writing of the peripatetic Kino, wryly observes, “*Qui multum peregrinatur, raro sanctificatur*”—“Who travels much is rarely made a saint.”

But the darkness deepens, as the history of the Gila drainage comes to resemble a novel by Cormac McCarthy. McNamee rightly observes a fact still overlooked today: the Spanish invented the taking of scalps that became an industry, one indulged in by all sides in the 19th century: “By 1800 . . . a mat of scalps numbering in the thousands bedecked the great doors of the cathedral in Chihuahua City.” Blood flows plentifully through that century and into ours, but the river, strangled by dams and irrigation and the cutting of riparian vegetation, beset by overgrazing of its watershed, diminishes until the hapless German prisoners find themselves walking on sand. Phoenix is founded, grows, metastasizes, sucks up water, eventually changes the climate. (A “Phoenician . . . will use three hundred gallons of water daily, the highest rate of consumption in the nation.”)

McNamee then examines the natural history of the Gila basin. As much as I like this book, I think he is at his weakest here, using perhaps too many secondary sources. The Dust Bowl affected eastern rather than southern New Mexico. Bitterns do not live in the mountain headwaters of the Gila; the state has one of the healthiest populations of cougars on the continent (which is not to say that they should be killed indiscriminately); squirrels are not hunted for their coats; and the Puerco on the other side of the

divide, not the Gila, is the muddiest river in the world. (The Gila undoubtedly comes close.) “Speciation” means something very different from “diversity.” Each of these errors is minor in itself, but the cumulative effect weakens McNamee’s authority.

On the subject of cattle, McNamee is right about the ill effects of overgrazing in the 1890’s but probably far too pessimistic about the possibility of a *rap-prochement* between modest cattle grazing and environmental health. However, he does not stand alone in this respect; the polarization of this issue is one of the tragedies of the modern West.

I do not want to leave the impression that *Gila* is a seriously flawed book. Though it is possible to quibble with details, McNamee’s central thesis—that greed and shortsightedness have trashed and continue to abuse a once magnificent and still haunting landscape—is inarguable. His documentation of the unintended effects of dams and reckless water policies is (forgive me) particularly damning. “When the great rains of October 1983 came, the rusty floodgates at Coolidge Dam failed to open. Glen Canyon Dam, on the Colorado, shivered loose from its bedding in soft sandstone, and its operators sounded a warning that it might collapse at any minute—taking with it, in turn, Hoover Dam, Davis Dam, Parker Dam, and Imperial Dam.” The story of the Central Arizona Project, its expense, destructiveness, and worthlessness, should be a lesson to conservationists and conservatives alike.

Finally, McNamee refuses to give in to facile pessimism. His models are Aldo Leopold and Ed Abbey, people who transcended contemporary culture’s short attention span and simplistic political divisions. In a statement reminiscent of Abbey, McNamee remarks, “To dam a river is only to pretend that risk can be minimized, and ours has been a risk-fearing age, to the great delight of insurance companies and cowards.” And in the spirit of Leopold, he concludes: “The nature of human beings is to dream. The nature of writers is to spin tales. It is time that we turn to better stories and dreams than we have now.

“A flowing Gila would be a start.”

Stephen Bodio’s most recently published book is *Querencia* (Clark City Press). He has a book about fine guns forthcoming.

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Letter From Louisville

by Katherine Dalton

Merging Local Government



You may think of Louisville, Kentucky—if you think of it at all—as a sprawling, midsize, metropolitan community of 800,000 in the Upper South. But like most other American cities, Louisville is legally not one community, but many. Countywide there is a total of 95 governments: Louisville, the county, and 93 small cities. There are also 22 fire districts, two main police forces, and two EMS services. Some of our city fathers think we are in danger of smothering under this crazy quilt. Consequently, for the fifth time in four decades, government consolidation in Jefferson County has come up for debate.

In the name of progress, efficiency, and tax savings, many in the county are pushing some kind of extensive government reform—to bring to this hodgepodge “one leader, one legislative body, and one vision,” as Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson puts it. The issue is a complicated one, in part because merger could mean very different things. Jefferson County could abolish all governments and establish a metro government countywide. The county could merge with all but Louisville and the 11 largest small cities, leaving these municipalities certain powers. The city and county governments alone could merge and leave all the small cities intact. Or the city and county could stay much as they are and simply merge certain functions.

The debate concerns not just what Louisville is, but what it will become. Some civic leaders look longingly at two comparable neighbors, both of which have consolidated governments: Indianapolis, which has grown 13 percent in the past two decades, and Nashville, up 2 percent in the same period. Since 1970, Jefferson County has lost about 30,000 people. “Why have those cities

prospered so substantially better than we?” asked A. Wallace “Skip” Grafton, a Democratic insider and a partner at the state’s largest law firm. He believes the answer is, in part, merged government. Through consolidation, Indianapolis and Nashville have come up with a way “to arrive at a community consensus of what they want to do.” That consensus, he said, has led to growth.

In Jefferson County, merger was last voted on, and voted down, in 1982 and 1983. The fight was a bitter one. Today, opponents are already organizing to defeat any sweeping measure that would threaten their constituencies, and the rhetoric has grown sharp.

By no means does everyone share Grafton’s and the mayor’s desire for consolidation. Jefferson County District “C” Commissioner Darryl T. Owens said that while Mayor Abramson has indicated his support for “major surgery” in local government, “before I operate, I want to know what the illness is.” Owens does not believe that multiple services necessarily mean duplication and inefficiency. “The reality is that merger costs more and is less efficient—that’s the data,” he said. “And I don’t know that we necessarily need one leader.”

Somewhere in the middle is Peyton Hoge III, mayor of the small city of Anchorage. He favors merging city and county governments but opposes including the small cities such as his own. He wonders why all communities in Jefferson County should speak with one voice, for various areas want various services and zoning laws. “Our goals are different.”

The most commonly used argument for merger is that it will bring more economic growth to greater Louisville. Bill Stone, president of Louisville Plate Glass Company, speaks for many when he touts the marketing advantage Louisville would gain if it were one of the 25 largest cities in the country. (Merged with the entire county, Louisville would actually become number 16. It is now far down the list at 58.)

Since the 50’s, the fight for one government has been led by the Louisville business community. The most recent attempts in 1982 and 1983 were led by the Chamber of Commerce,

which spent \$600,000 unsuccessfully to promote two plans that would have merged city and county governments. In Louisville, the business community wants two things: a simplified government structure (“so they only have to make one call, instead of two,” as merger opponent Darryl Owens puts it) and more economic growth. Louisville’s Mayor Abramson said consulting firms who help companies plan moves call up Louisville on their data base, see a city population of 269,000, and strike it off their list as too small for consideration, even though the county is home to 665,000 and the metro area totals 800,000.

Some merger proponents also promise cost savings from consolidating agencies and functions. As there is no plan on the table yet, they cannot cite specific instances. More importantly, say others, one government would bring a more focused use of tax dollars. Skip Grafton said the real benefit of one police department is that citizens would get “one policy and one strategic plan for law enforcement, rather than two.” With increasingly limited resources, “we need to focus the dollars to get the maximum benefit from them.” Abramson thinks this has already happened with the 1990 merger of the city and county police departments’ narcotics units. As a single entity, Metro Narcotics is now “more effective, more productive, and our arrests are up 14 percent,” he said.

If we take the Hippocratic argument that we should first do no harm, we need to look at what constituencies would be affected—and possibly hurt—by consolidation. The thorniest problem politically is undoubtedly the small cities, most of which are located in the vocal, upper-middle-class, mostly white East End. Jefferson County has 93 of these small cities, and one in five county residents lives in them. These cities levy their own taxes and fees, collect their own garbage, and do their own street repair. The larger of them run their own fire and police departments.

In 1982 and 1983, the small city residents voted strongly for merger. But that was because the cities were left untouched by a plan to merge only Louisville and county government. If

the small cities were asked to dissolve to implement a future merger plan, that plan would probably lose a lot of well-connected votes.

The small cities offer their residents two things: identity and services. Cities such as Jeffersontown and Middletown (both founded in 1797, just 17 years after Louisville) are communities with strong personalities and long histories. Residents are loath to give these up. As for services, proponents of a merged form of government have not explained to the small cities' mayors how one government can maintain the service level that the cities now have, especially without new taxes. In the small city of Shively, Mayor Jim Jenkins said that most residents "feel like if they were part of Jefferson County, they would have less services and the costs would not be significantly lower."

Anchorage's Peyton Hoge argues that small city residents don't get much for their county tax dollars as it is. They are willing to pay additional city taxes because they get something for that money—including responsiveness. Both Hoge and Mayor Arthur Draut of St. Matthews maintain that their city police departments have a much quicker re-

sponse time than the county police. Perhaps more importantly, small city residents don't have to go far to voice a complaint to their representatives. The cities' councils and mayors "are awfully close to the people, and if they don't provide services, they hear about it," Hoge said.

Even the smallest cities value their independence. In Norbourne Estates, which comprises 176 homes, part-time Mayor Tommy Elliott is angry at the county's shrugging response to his request for more help in enforcing the county street-parking law. If Norbourne were a Louisville city neighborhood or part of a metro government, Elliott would have no recourse other than to write his alderman. But since Norbourne Estates is a city, Elliott can take action to solve the enforcement problem. What his city has done is to collect for itself the insurance tax that currently goes to the county. The \$10,000 to \$13,000 Elliott expects this tax to bring in will probably be spent on hiring off-duty county police officers to patrol Norbourne streets. Like other small-city mayors, Elliott is not opposed to the city and county governments merging. But as for asking Norbourne Estates to dissolve, "We don't see what we have to gain."

Ben Richmond, president and CEO of the Urban League in Louisville, said Louisville's inner city and mostly black West End worry that merger means blacks in Louisville will lose political clout. Today blacks have four "safe" seats on the board of aldermen, and one of the three county commissioners (Darryl Owens) is also black. In the city of Louisville, blacks now make up 30 percent of the population. Countywide, that number drops to 17 percent. Under reorganization, their clout would be diluted and their representatives would naturally have a smaller voice in a larger government.

Bill Stone of Louisville Plate Glass believes merged government is so important that if compromising with the black community is what it takes to get their agreement, compromise should be made. If the black community demands a disproportionate amount of representation on any metro government council, he said, then it should be given that concession. That may not be enough: a member of the merger charter commission in 1982 and 1983 said that the commission gave one of its black members

every concession he asked for and then watched him go out and campaign against the final plan. Of course, merger could pass in Jefferson County without the black vote. But that would be politically unpalatable and is unlikely.

If Louisville's blacks are afraid of losing representation, the middle-class white southwest seems almost afraid of *too much* representation. Here most residents live in the unincorporated county, where they don't receive many services and don't seem to want them. Their primary fear is that merger will mean higher taxes.

There are other hurdles, too. To take just one example, the Louisville fire department is all-professional, while the county's 21 departments are staffed by a mixture of professional and volunteer firemen. Merging the city and county departments would be almost impossible today, and turning the largely volunteer county forces into all-professional departments would be prohibitively expensive. Under merger, city and county police unions would have to be brought in line with each other, as would city and county civil service unions. The immediate effect of merger would likely be an increase in the cost of these employees. This is one of Darryl Owens' arguments for the status quo.

With so many different constituencies likely to lose things they now have and want, what does Jefferson County have to gain by consolidation? The continued and improved health of downtown, according to Joe Corradino, former chairman of the merger charter commission in 1983. "Unless the city and county get together, the fiscal condition of these two governments 10 to 20 years from now will be threatened." The city budget is really the one that's threatened, as all the growth in greater Louisville is in the county. Corradino is especially concerned that Louisville's downtown will decay as taxpayers continue to move farther out into Jefferson County (and beyond). "Any decent-sized city with a core that hasn't remained vibrant over time will have tremendous budget problems." With one budget, the merged government could draw from a larger pool of tax dollars and redistribute them over a wider area—spending some of affluent St. Matthews' monies on downtown, for example.

There is more than civic-minded charity to the argument for merger, ac-

Dispatches from



The Last Ditch

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cording to University of Louisville urban policy professor Hank Savitch. He points out that suburban residents have a pocketbook interest in the health of downtown. His work has shown that while there are wealthy suburbs surrounding troubled urban centers, in general, "suburbs do better when central cities do well. The areas that are in deepest trouble in America are areas that have seen their central cities go down the chute."

Regardless of how one comes down on this issue, much community feeling can be salvaged if this debate is properly organized. There was a perception in 1982 and 1983 that the merger plans were "being rammed down people's throats," said Sheryl G. Snyder, who served as legal advisor to the merger charter commission at the time and supported city/county government reorganization. Businessman Woodford Porter, Sr., agreed. Though concerned about diluted representation for the West End (Porter is black), he, too, was a merger proponent in 1982. After the plan was defeated that fall, Porter felt it shouldn't have been immediately proposed again and so withdrew from the debate in 1983. The plan failed both times, he said, because "large portions of the community felt they didn't have any input."

This spring, a government reform steering committee was named by the county judge, the mayor, the board of aldermen president, and a representative county commissioner. This steering committee of 16 is nominating a full committee that will be empowered to draft a better government proposal. The mayor and county judge have promised that the committee will be broad-based and will have the authority to present whatever reform plan it determines is best. Merger proponents and opponents agree: if the committee does not have the freedom to draft its own plan, merger cannot be sold to the county and a merger referendum will fail. The committee may find that the best plan is not a sweeping reorganization, but a gradual, *de facto* merger of certain services. This is already happening. While the city and county fire departments may never become one (and probably shouldn't), the county departments as a group are looking at standardizing response times, pay scales, and benefits and are discussing joint buying agreements that will save them all money. The small cities may never willingly give up their own

police forces with their two-minute response times, but some city and county police units (among them Crimes Against Children and Metro Narcotics) have been consolidated, apparently successfully, and there may be others to follow.

The city and county compact that now exists seems to be working, and Jefferson County may be well advised to renew it. The compact, passed in 1986 after the merger fights and subsequent annexation wars, did several things. It resolved a major dispute between Louisville and the county over the distribution of occupational tax revenues. It effectively froze all city boundaries, putting on hold the annexation disputes. It also merged several city and county agencies, among them the Planning Commission and Economic Development. Renewing the compact before it expires in 1998 will not be an easy job, but it will certainly be easier than negotiating a merger of governments.

Louisville alderman Tom Owen said that what he would like to see is merger by default. "We've got a lot of merged functions [already]," he said. Slowly, perhaps other services or departments could be consolidated (he did not say which ones). This suggestion has many advantages. It spreads out the costs of merger over time. It leaves the small cities to govern their own local affairs, as their residents want them to do, and it is not controversial or divisive, which is what even a successful merger campaign will be. Everyone I interviewed who was involved in the 1982 and 1983 reorganization attempts agreed that it ended up being a bitter fight. The net effect was to divide this community, rather than to bring it together. It would be a pity to see that happen again.

Merger of some services would not give Jefferson County the single executive and pool of tax money some civic leaders want, and it would not solve all annexation disputes. But there is a strength in having several competing voices, rather than one. The current debate in Louisville over where to build a new bridge across the Ohio River is a case in point. With a merged government, the eastern county location probably would have been given the nod and Mayor Abramson's forceful arguments for a downtown location might never have been made.

Of more concern than higher taxes, and even more than the threat of losing

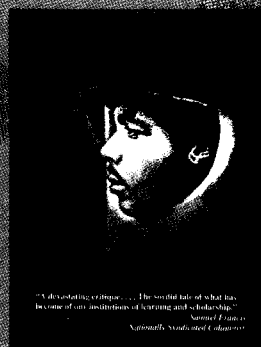
old communities such as Middletown, a unified city and county government could become so monolithic that "one vision" would overwhelm all others. Fortunately, as the failure of prior force-fed merger attempts has shown, local feeling runs high throughout Jefferson County. That means change here cannot come without real consensus—which is all a small "r" republican can ask for.

Katherine Dalton is a freelance writer in Louisville.

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POLITICS



Anna Myreck-Wodecki

Glamour, Glitter, Glitz, and Glory

by Tomislav Sunic

The Rise of Video Politics

Nobody can deny that the videosphere has completely devoured the graphosphere. The one-dimensional surreal world has hijacked the three-dimensional real world. The CNN and ABC networks in America, the French TF1 and TF2, have totally displaced books and journals. The swift, levitating image has come ahead of the solidly grounded written word. No longer is the presidential office the center of command, as TV has become the epicenter of political power. Riots and military coups that once aimed at capturing the prince's palace now aim at capturing the TV tower. The video-oriented Western hemisphere in general, and Hollywood-focused America in particular, has ceased to gauge presidential candidates by their "right-wing" or "left-wing" pedigree or their Republican or Democratic affiliation. Rather, it is their choice of hairstyles, or the cut of their clothes, that gets them media attention or proximity to the White House.

Undoubtedly, with the end of history comes the end of the traditional notion

of politics. The classical war of ideas, as Régis Debray recently wrote, has been replaced by the war of "good looks." The last American "realpolitician," Richard Nixon, at least had the courage to admit that his 1960 presidential campaign had gone sour because, unlike his rival John Kennedy, he was not "likable." The postmodern ideology of good looks, coupled with the video-political "image," is rapidly becoming the new destiny of Western man.

In the laboratory of video politics the most important tools are p.r. strategy and "have a nice day" conduct. Of course, if a politician is to retain lasting credibility, he must also learn the politically correct metalanguage, known as "baby talk." The beauty of baby talk is that it immediately disarms the interlocutor yet never discredits the speaker. It denotes everything, without connoting anything. Short elliptic sentences teeming with Aesopian doublespeak, and smacking of sentimental succor, are the surest and shortest avenue to lasting video-political success. In the videospheric game, America takes the lead, thanks to her Puritan "pathos of distance," as well as her apolitical candor that allows all sorts of video-political escapades.

Take the United Nations-sponsored American invasion of Somalia, for example. When the American marines landed on the Somali beaches, they came under the rapid fire of . . . TV cameras. The subsequent U.N. mission was largely tailored to the appetites of numerous TV crews, which chased the U.N. soldiers more than the ragtag Somali fighters. In the same vein, the ongoing war in the Balkans is also being teleguided by TV cameras whose graphic images of horror provide good consciousness to distant prime-time viewers. In a new paroxysm of vicarious humanism, TV masses worldwide worry about the displaced and the deprived as long as the anonymous TV elites furnish them with the right dose of lacrimal material. In a grotesque twist of modern politics, the fleeting image of the TV world has dethroned the real political world. Henceforth, the surreal nonevent keeps endlessly creating the real political event with all its tragic consequences on

balkanized battlefields everywhere. If we were to paraphrase Friedrich Nietzsche, the TV world with its surreal values has completely devalued all real human values.

The videospheric show appears to be of special interest to the new political class in postcommunist Eastern Europe. By ignoring the tricks of video politics, Eastern European imitation of Western democracy is often met with big laughs. Certainly, to regurgitate democratic slogans is today in great TV demand, but when this regurgitation turns into flawed mimicry, it then borders on the grotesque. For all Eastern European politicians, the CNN network functions as the superego that creates their democratic image but also unmasks their ex-communist rhetoric and their inherent customs of monkey business. Having emerged culturally castrated and aesthetically emasculated from 45 years of communist terror, the Eastern European elites are having enormous problems in capturing the heart and soul of the American videocracy. Small wonder that their quest for the video West often results in a death wish to be more papal than the Pope, i.e., more videomorphic than the new video Vatican in Washington, D.C. Predictably, Eastern European mimicry of Western democracy can only result in a flimsy escape into the dangerous world of the unknown.

Traditionally, Eastern and Central European elites, unlike the French and Anglo-Americans, lack glamour, glitter, glitz, and glory: the four mandatory elements of political success today. This new political class recruits itself from the pool of provincial "hicks" and ex-party hacks with a meager sense of foreign video-political empathy. Eastern European politicians have enormous difficulties hiding their past communist pedigree. Many speak the basic, broken, heartbreaking English that hurts the Western eustachian TV tube. The only lauded figure in the West European videosphere is the much-admired Czech Vaclav Havel, who embodies the perfectly projected mixture of a latter-day hippie, postmodern Ghandi, and Angel Gabriel announcing to the world the Gospel of permanent peace. As far as his hapless Eastern European neighbors in

Poland, Russia, Slovakia, and Croatia are concerned, they display the huge Slavic heart—but also the huge epic mouth. When they roam along the East River corridors, they appear unable to shed their *homo sovieticus* veneer that they inherited from the communist way of life. All of them strike the observer's eye as exotic species with an amazing talent for singing liberal slogans without really knowing what those slogans mean. Yet, behind the surface of their democratic dilettantism, few can hide their former communist skin.

One of the problems of Central and East European politicians is their lack of bureaucratic perseverance and technological commitment. To argue, to walk, to talk in a way acceptable in Paris or in Madrid is often rejected in modern America. All Americans know perfectly well how important p.r. and sound bites are for professional video success. All Americans know deadly well that in professional life, friends never complain to each other; they always complain *about* each other to a *third* person. For the lyrical Eastern European heart and for the epic Eastern European mouth, the American video-political game is often perceived as a sign of cold, Puritan, legalist hypocrisy mixed with a twisted offshoot of modern make-believe democracy. Few can grasp that what counts in politics today is not the political substance but rather the apolitical “fun” style. Alas, in the hi-tech global democracy, as Neil Postman wrote, the classical notion of politics will be made between those who amuse the TV masses to death and those who bore them to death.

Central and Eastern European politicians, be they of Germanic or Slavic breed, stutter and mutter. It is certainly not farfetched to say that the tragedy of German diplomacy, during this last century, lies in its mystical character and its excessive sense of Faustian solemnity. Had the Germans been more extroverted in their political appetites, had they been more versed in the strategy of global humanism, Germany would probably have become the reference for modern high politics. In today's Germany, the tragic and awkward style can pass, but in the Anglo-American world it has no entry at all. German politicians in general, and East European politicians in particular, represent the 19th-century world whose tragic narrative and boundless belief in honor frequently fall on

deaf ears in fast-forward mercantile America. One of these days it would be useful for sociologists and linguists to examine the German word *Ehre* and contrast its meaning to the English word “honor,” which, over centuries, has given birth to different political commitments and caused different geopolitical constellations.

Politically correct “baby talk” means little if it is not accompanied by politically correct “baby walk”—a custom that Europeans brutally lack. Is it an accident that all Central and Eastern European politicians appear awkward on the TV screen in Washington? Is it an accident that the American political class feels much more at ease with Canadians or the English than with their Continental allies? For a long time the Palestinian Yasser Arafat was unable to push his cause across video-political America because of his eternally unshaven face and his head scarf that tagged him as an Ali Baba bent on killing modern democracies. Conversely, his recent alter ego, Ms. Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi, brought the TV limelight to her native Palestinians, thanks to her excellent knowledge of English and her *femme fatale* allures. Owing to her feminist streak, the Palestinians finally got world recognition and the red-carpet welcome in Washington. From now on, young, intelligent, and good-looking women will be an enormous asset in video politics—not just on the back stage but right in the first row. Who can deny that Bill Clinton partly owes his election to Hillary? Even the much-admired Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* got off the Soviet ground thanks to his beautiful wife Raisa, who looks surprisingly like Anna Karenina. Must it be recalled that communism in Eastern Europe partly collapsed because communist hacks had bulldog-like faces and their heavy-set spouses had hairy, unshaven legs?

Small wonder that the video ignorance of smaller peoples worldwide further hampers their uncertain voyage toward shaky world recognition. Indeed, Lithuanians, Estonians, or Croats risk becoming Banana Republics should they not quickly learn the video-political game. For centuries, high politics has never been kind to them: once geography was their destiny; today video politics is their fatality. Thrown into a small and claustrophobic chunk of Europe, surrounded on the average by four nasty neighbors, each taking a nasty turn, they

were always forced to make pilgrimages; once upon a time to the Vatican and Versailles, today to Washington, D.C. For centuries they had to practice how to “kiss the hand” in Vienna and in the Vatican in order to obtain a modicum of national sovereignty. Today, in order to survive politically, they have to “kiss a--” in the liberal video world.

Ironically, Central and Eastern Europeans are still miles away from any political correctness. One can say things in postcommunist Eastern Europe that in the West would be immediately slapped by TV opprobrium. Indeed, the politically correct, affirmative-action “baby talk” of Western democracies is only the cool version of the communist “wooden language,” which not long ago permeated Eastern European syntax and style. The communist East faced censorship; the capitalist West imposed self-censorship. Western discourse teems with coated sentences and sophisms, such as “it appears,” “it seems,” or “one might say”—everything means nothing, and therefore nothing means everything. The old American rocker, Frank Zappa, best summarized the make-believe video world of the West with his song “You Are What You Is.”

With the TV image comes good political mannerisms, which Europe badly lacks. Europeans are obsessed with smoking cigarettes. As far as Eastern Europeans are concerned, they are pathologically hooked on cigarettes. In today's official America, smoking is considered a “violation of someone's human rights,” something Europeans reject. Americans know very well that in the American political establishment it is perfectly OK to snort cocaine or to smoke a joint; yet European cigarette-smoking leaves a bad political odor and seriously cripples the image of new countries in the making.

The times of the commissar and the Kalashnikov are definitely over. Today, the new TV archetype is the liberal caviar entertainer with a giant smile on his face and good dentures to disarm every adversary. In all likelihood, the new hero of the 21st century will be a mixture of a movie star and a car salesman who preaches an ideology of fun and who practices a dictatorship of well-being. Gone forever is the era of the political fighter and the rugged individual of Jack London's America. In the era of the TV image, it is no longer important what a politician has in his head, but how his

head looks and talks. As the respected French sociologist Jean Baudrillard recently wrote, modern politics will be the art of "video-fooling." He who knows how to sell himself on the TV screen will be the ultimate political winner, regardless of how much of a half-wit he may actually be.

Carl Schmitt wrote a long time ago that politics is the art of distinguishing between friend and foe. But who will divine the foe in the one-dimensional videosphere? In the 21st century, the art of telling the foe will mean properly seeing behind his clothes and makeup. The coming titans that lurk on the horizon will no longer be dressed in brown shirts and black boots. They will make their appearance in Gucci suits and Bally shoes.

Tomislav Sunic is a former professor of political science at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, and the author of The European New Right (Peter Lang, 1990). He currently serves in Croatia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Memoirs of a Reagan Hack

by Paul Foster

The Saga of a Sensitive Conservative

The sensitive conservative. An oxymoron to most liberals. An eye-averting embarrassment to many conservatives. And, it would seem in 1994, an irrelevancy. Who needs sensitive conservatives when Democrats in power can assure tolerance and sensitivity? All in all, it's a dubious time to be a touchy-feely man of the right. Just my luck.

Actually, I never expected to be labeled the touchy-feely type, no matter the era. Looking back, I can see there were warning signs in college. A coed friend once remarked that I was "the only nice Republican" she had ever met. Yeah, right. But my guffaws died in my throat when I noticed her laughing eyes weren't. She was serious. I tried to shrug off the comment, but only weeks later another companion told me, "I don't see you as a conservative," in the same

tone one tells a dieting friend, "You're not fat." I was worried.

Where had I gone wrong? My parents were charter subscribers to *National Review*. Every Christmas I had asked for and received from Santa a new toy gun. And in the fifth grade, I spread word that any classmate who went trick-or-treating for UNICEF was a fellow traveler. And now I was a "nice Republican."

After graduation, I headed for Ronald Reagan's Washington, a shaky pilgrim in search of spiritual renewal. With luck I managed to get a job at the White House, as a writer in the Office of Presidential Messages. My actual office was on the ground floor of the Old Executive Office Building next door. Sure I was a peon, but a conservative Republican peon. I felt good. A certain equilibrium returned. I started wearing fur.

Things were going well. I read the *Washington Times* faithfully, bought my first yellow power-tie, and occasionally meandered across 17th Street to the then-fashionable Maison Blanche for drinks. I was drafting letters on crime, the drug problem, aid to the Contras. I even walked into a fund-raiser at the same time as Fawn Hall, feeling the proximate celebrity glow of a thousand flashbulbs in my face.

Still, there were signs. One morning sitting in on the usual office bull session, I casually asked if anyone had caught "that fascinating Bill Moyers program on PBS last night." Scorn was heaped, suspicions were raised. Soon, I began noticing my assignments were littered with terms like safety net and SSI while my colleague, an ex-hippie who now looked like the cover boy for *Today's Accountant*, wrote about Star Wars and ICBMs.

I tried to compensate. I attended Heritage Foundation briefers, even snoozers like "Harvest of Shame—the Shocking Truth About Farm Supports." I left a dog-eared copy of *Republican Reptile* sprawled across my desk. I rented Chuck Norris videos. I spit a lot.

Yet the gang still seemed wary of me. The clincher came when Lisa, our Queen of the Sob Story, had to take maternity leave. Lisa handled correspondence involving personal tragedy, and she could craft replies that would wring tears out of a bank examiner. Replacing her was Topic A at our morning staff meeting, but who? Mr. ICBM massaged his freshly shaven chin, eyed me un-

blinkingly, made a grimace, and said simply, "Paul . . . he's good at that stuff." I glanced around. Now all my colleagues were massaging their chins and grimacing, their heads slowly nodding. Yeah, they were thinking, *Paul's good at that stuff. He's good at . . . pap.*

The boss mumbled something about taking my time to consider, but I knew there was only one answer—I became King of the Sob Story. And with it went any hope of overcoming my rep—I was now a full-blown sensitive kinda guy.

For awhile I tried to make the best of it, churning out sympathetic yet sober replies—adding the compassionate touch, while holding fast to conservative principles: "While the President is sympathetic to your predicament, Mr. Jones, he is unable to grant a stay of your execution until after the winning Super Duper Jackpot Lotto number is announced. Sorry, would if he could. Take it easy."

I tried. But something gnawed inside me. Was I really making the best use of my talents—cranking out messages in the bowels of the White House? With all my compassion and sensitivity (I was beyond denying it now), maybe, just maybe, I could become . . . a talk-show host. Or a psychotherapist. Whichever seemed easier. And heck, with my angle I could probably be a therapist on a talk show. "He's conservative, he's Republican, and he could be counseling your children. Right-wing psychotherapist—the next Geraldo."

I began applying to clinical psychology programs. I had no background in the field, but I was full of compassion and had seen every episode of the *Bob Newhart Show* at least twice, a fact I didn't fail to mention on my application forms. Something worked, because a couple of schools actually invited me for an interview.

One was a large Southern state university. Sitting in the school's psychology department lounge with my fellow invited applicants, I was nervous. We had made the first cut, but after these interviews only half of us would be invited back. The faculty strolled in and took their places. This was intended to be a friendly warm-up session, before the more grueling individual interviews took place. We applicants took turns introducing ourselves. After I did so, a professor interrupted, "Are you the fellow who works at the White House?" "Yes, I am," I said, hastily turning to the next

applicant, hoping she would begin.

"Does that mean you're a Republican?" asked a female professor. (I checked the scene on my mind's VCR: she, head cocked to the side, staring smugly, awaiting my answer—I, leaning forward, inches from her face, suddenly screaming, "NO, LADY, IT MEANS I'M A FASCIST!" Click! I hit the fast-forward button just in time.) "Yes it does," I said, laughing amiably.

Scanning the room, I noticed no one else was laughing. Just a few polite, nervous smiles. "Am I the only Republican in this room?" Silence. Then an older professor came to my rescue, "On, no, no—we have Republicans here, and I think you'll..." "Are you Republican, Jack?" someone shouted at my rescuer. "No, no, no!!!" said Professor Jack with the alacrity of one wrongly caught in the guillotine. No further rescue was attempted. I started to ask about membership requirements for the local country club, but no one seemed to know.

Retreating north, I ended up attending a small school in Pennsylvania. The town had a statue of Jimmy Stewart in the courthouse square, so I figured the place couldn't be all bad. Even still, I tried to keep a low profile. When fellow students asked about my prior experience, I blandly replied that I "had worked in Washington for the government." A nice phrase that had a way of making eyes glaze over with visions of me toiling over form 1047-C in some windowless, fluorescent-lit bureaucratic bunker. People rarely inquired further.

On the first day of class, I learned that a number of people in the program practiced Buddhist meditation and would welcome any newcomers to their Wednesday night meetings. On the second day, I learned that we would be making a weekend retreat for a hypnosis seminar. And by the end of the week, I almost got into a fight over abortion with my new best friend, a liberal Jewish classmate from Long Island. Being a conservative psychology student was going to be no day at the Coors Brewery.

In the days ahead, I glumly wandered down departmental hallways, noting the faculty office doors decorated with the usual *Doonesbury* cartoons, anti-Bush bumper stickers, and announcements for Womyn Faculty Empowerment meetings. Once, my heart skipped a beat when I spotted a "Support the NRA" sign on one door. It turned out to be the door to the janitor's room. Fine. He

and I became buddies. He would tell me deer-hunting stories, and I didn't call him names.

Being a practicing Catholic didn't help either. Ever since Freud, Catholicism, with its in-your-face moral absolutes, has been high on the list of psychotherapy's demons—right up there with cold, domineering mothers. The field is full of "recovering Catholics" saved from the damnation of eternal Catholic guilt by a baptism of the couch.

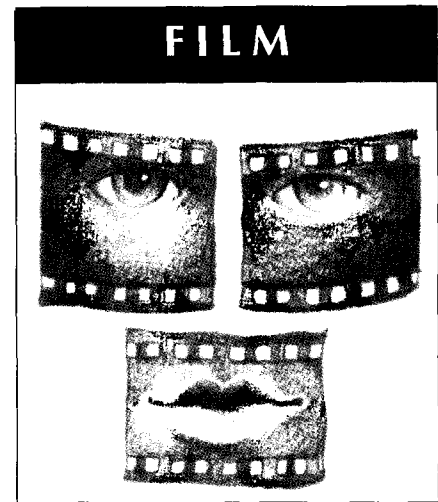
Not yet savvy to this fact, I innocently noted that I'd be a little late for a departmental function because I had to go to Mass first. "I didn't know you were a bead squeezer," a classmate remarked, "I used to be one, too." Hmmm, bead squeezer—hadn't heard that one. Mackerel snapper, yes, but bead squeezer was a new one.

Again, I tried to fit in. In a clinical psych program, everybody stares a lot. Long, soul-searching stares, like in the movies. Stares that let you know I've been there. Or I am there. Or at least, I'll be there. And I did my best to return those oh-so-sympathetic lingering stares, glistening in empathic recognition, with my own gee-whiz stares of grateful acknowledgment—this whether the topic be the breakup with my girlfriend or the breakdown of my car.

I tried. My colleagues tried. But Lord knows it was tough for them to get past the bead-squeezing, woman-oppressing, right-winging, Neanderthal facade and see the real me. Just like those White House clouds, only different. I suppose I should be grateful that the program let me stay in. They did their best to shape me into a bona fide therapist. And I can spot a dysfunctional sibling triangulation with the best of them.

Yet somehow I never did fit in. And today? Well, the life of a sensitive conservative is never easy. Sure you could end up being the object of some pretty young liberal thing's missionary infatuation ("such a nice guy—he just needs a little straightening out"). On the other hand, you could wind up making ends meet as a psychotherapist in a nonprofit counseling agency in the Bronx. Like me. So let that be a lesson to you empathetic Young Republicans. Curb those moments of sentiment. In the words of P.T. Pöz, "The Tin Man should have left well enough alone."

Paul Foster writes from the Bronx, New York.



Anna Mlyck-Wodnicki

What Victims?

by Philip Jenkins

Natural Born Killers

Produced by Jane Hamsher, Don Murphy, and Clayton Townsend

Directed by Oliver Stone

Story by Quentin Tarantino

Screenplay by David Veloz, Richard

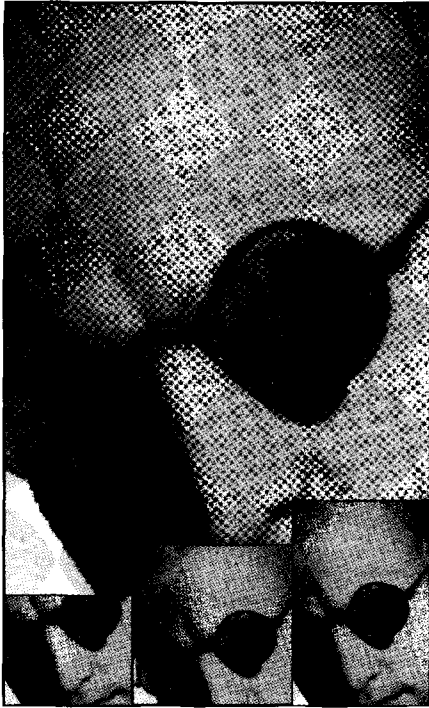
Rutowski, and Oliver Stone

Released by Warner Brothers

The release of Oliver Stone's new film *Natural Born Killers* was heralded by the sort of publicity barrage that arouses the skepticism of even the most mercurial filmgoer. How can any film, still less one dealing with so exploited and exploitative a theme as serial murder, merit so much apparent hyperbole—"brilliant," "revolutionary," "flabbergasting," "dazzling," and so on? To my surprise, I could not challenge any of these claims and would go still further. Apart from its aesthetic qualities, *Natural Born Killers* is a powerful moral document, among the most important American films released in 20 years. It also challenges our critical vocabulary, forcing the use of terms that would never normally occur in the context of a popular film: words like radical, overwhelming, and (quite unquestionably) subversive. Comparisons to Juvenal are not absurd.

The two *Natural Born Killers* of the title are Mick and Mallory, played respectively by Woody Harrelson and Juliette Lewis. Both characters are the violent products of brutally abusive

homes and disturbed childhoods, and they begin a three-month murder spree that claims some 50 lives. So far, this is scarcely new, as a similar story was told in the 1973 classic *Badlands* and in the more recent *Kalifornia*, in which Lewis



also starred. Very early in the film, however, the daring originality of Stone's vision becomes apparent in the recounting of Mallory's abuse through the medium of a situation-comedy portraying Rodney Dangerfield as the incestuous father, to the accompaniment of a peculiarly inane laugh track. This introduces the central theme of the film, the extent to which vulgar popular culture has saturated and polluted American life, at once shaping the deeds of the violent and perverted and preventing the public from viewing these acts as anything other than entertaining pabulum. It is highly desirable to view this film in a crowded theater, where members of the audience join in the utterly inappropriate laughter of the imaginary sketch, presumably because this response has been so thoroughly conditioned and internalized.

The ensuing murder spree is recounted through the eyes of the mass media, who lionize Micky and Mallory, the charming "M&M killers," making them into folk heroes for adoring fans across the world. Stone's central vision of media irresponsibility produces some superb images, like the crowd greeting the captured pair with placards reading "Murder me, Micky!" or the talking-

heads shots of young aficionados comparing the current superstars with past demigods. Only Manson, it seems, had anything approaching the same charisma, but Micky and Mallory are by common consent "way cooler." The satire on public reactions to villainy is constructed with the subtlety of a chain saw, but even here there are some touches from a finer-honed scalpel. After their panegyrics on the monster pair, the fans do observe in passing that of course mass murder is morally objectionable; but if it need be done, let it be with the panache and romanticism of "M&M."

The media serving swill to the weak-brained and morally degenerate multitude are personified by a reptilian Australian exposé merchant played by Robert Downey, Jr., who hopes to achieve the greatest true-crime coup in television history by presenting a live interview with Micky during the Super Bowl. He hopes that this will surpass his earlier shows with Ted Bundy, John Wayne Gacy, and even Charles Manson (though as Micky concedes, it's tough to go against the king). But his plans are derailed by the one small fact that actions have consequences, even, remarkably enough, the actions of television journalists who believe they exist in an empyrean far above the simplistic demands of quotidian morality. Micky succeeds in stating the appeal of murder and his natural calling to be a killer well enough to delight the journalist, but also sufficiently to incite the inmates of the prison where the conversation is filmed. They react by beginning a riot closely modeled on the appalling carnage that claimed at least 40 lives in the Santa Fe prison in 1980, an incident that starkly proved the horrendous, sadistic violence of which human beings are capable once they free themselves of both moral restraints and legal sanctions. Once the fictional riot begins, the surging blood-lust claims the mind of even the journalist, who realizes and wallows in the true aesthetic beauty of random murder. Like the police detective, the ostensible agent of public morality, he too is a budding serial killer.

Stone is suggesting, all too plausibly, that recent media ventures in glorifying "true crime" have come perilously close to awakening the homicidal urges that they are affecting to condemn. A harrowing sequence consists of a rogues' gallery of recent media superstars from real life: the Menendez brothers, O.J.

Simpson, Tonya Harding, and Lorena Bobbitt. It's all entertainment, isn't it? Well no, it isn't, and Stone is urging a consideration of the moral consequences of treating real-life villainy and suffering as ratings-fodder. We might recall the insouciant remark of the Paris journalist of the 1890's who praised the romantic bravado of a terrorist outrage by anarchists: "What do the victims matter if it is a fine gesture?" Within a year, the journalist himself had been mutilated in another "gesture," in which terrorists assaulted a cafe filled with innocent civilians. It would be grimly appropriate if some form of condign punishment could befall certain contemporary writers, investigative journalists, and broadcasting executives, though of course it won't. All we can hope for is that a handful will see *Natural Born Killers* and recognize the forces they are unleashing before it is altogether too late.

The performances in the film range from thoroughly adequate to quite superb, but the casting of Woody Harrelson as a psychopathic killer and rapist deserves special note. Harrelson is best known as the lovable dolt "Woody" in television's long-running *Cheers*, so of course there is a delicious element of playing against type. Can the "Woody" we know really say that you should never murder anyone on your wedding day? However, the full complexity of the role may escape those unfamiliar with the history of the actor's real-life father Charlie Harrelson, an imprisoned professional assassin whose victims included a federal judge and who has spent a decade fending off repeated allegations of involvement in the Kennedy assassination. One can only imagine the personal courage that permitted Woody Harrelson to undertake a role that came so close to his family's tragedy; but it would not be out of keeping with the raw nerve that permeates the whole work.

Natural Born Killers is shocking, grotesquely violent, and brutally excessive. It is also a definitive answer for anyone who dares to ask whether the modern cinema can produce a work of artistic genius.

Philip Jenkins is a professor of religious studies and history at Pennsylvania State University and author of Using Murder: The Social Construction of Serial Homicide (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 1994).

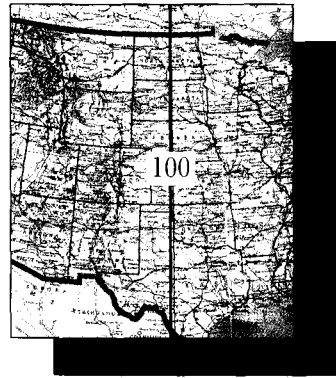
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The Home of the Brave

Vague and acrid as the ochereous smoke drifting in scarves and shoals from fires burning across the West, the specter of Range Reform pervaded the Rocky Mountain states last summer, the driest on record since 1932. In drought years ranchers must move their cattle rapidly off one pasture and onto the next in order to prevent them from biting down the sparse short grasses. Over on the Thoman Ranch on the Green River several miles south of Fontenelle Dam, they were shorthanded during the season as the youngest daughter, Laurie, completing her reign as Miss Rodeo Wyoming, appeared in rodeos and parades around the Western states, while in town, 30 miles away, I was sunk in an armchair scribbling notes for a book. When may a gentleman refuse a lady in distress? I think of Jeeves' answer to Bertie Wooster, who had inquired on what occasion a gentleman may appear without a necktie. *There is no occasion*, Jeeves replied, *when a gentleman may not wear a necktie.*

Being a friend of Mary Thoman is hard work. Back in Kemmerer, my study was filling up with documents pertaining to the Cumberland/Uinta Grazing Allotment Steering Committee; down here on the Green River I had been in the saddle since 7:30 A.M., and it was getting on to six in the evening now. Mary sat the bay thoroughbred, barking orders from under the rolled brim of her purple felt hat at the cows, and at me. We had pushed the 30-odd head of cattle out of the Seedskadee Allotment (federal range), for which the Thomans' grazing permit was set to expire at midnight, and were trying to put them across the river where they balked, most of them standing in water to their chests but some breaking from the herd to gallop onto the grassy verge. We ki-yied and sshed, hazing them, setting the horses at the water to push the cows into mid-stream and breaking away to round up and drive back the renegades, but each time the leaders were lifted off bottom by the current and began swimming they changed their minds and returned to shallow water. My horse was so exhaust-



ed I could get no acceleration from him, and at last Mary said that we had better hold the cows together in the river until Mickey Thoman, who was bringing along a second bunch, arrived. "As hot as it is, I'm surprised they don't want to get wet. They're behaving really badly today. I wish Mother would hurry up and get here."

It was pleasant sitting horseback in the river where the weeds ran their full length in the freshened current caused by a recent release from the dam upstream, pale boulders parted the infinite series of advancing black wavelets with a purling sound, and the big riverine cottonwoods turned over slowly on a light wind, exposing the pale undersides of their leaves. On both sides of the river the desert lifted away in golden steps beyond the vivid green of the trees. Mary, as she kept a watchful eye on the cows, described for me their complicated social life: how they will park their calves when they need to go to water, how they provide daycare for the calves of other cows . . . "—Bring that one back!" she shouted, pointing suddenly behind me. I reined the horse about and took off at a gallop, slapping with the full length of my legs at the broad barrel.

"You know," I told her when we had brought everyone together again, "maybe the way for you ranchers to get around the environmentalist crowd is to play up the humane and sympathetic qualities of cows: their intelligence, their caring nature, their inherently progressive social system—"

"No," Mary said decidedly, "it wouldn't work. They wouldn't let us sell them for beef then. Here comes Mother along the fence with the cows. What is she doing on the other side

of it?"

She rode over to greet her across the wire while I held the cows in the water, and returned to explain that Mickey, seeing the gate above the river in the closed position, had assumed that it was also locked. An electric fence installed by the government to keep cattle out of the wildlife refuge prevented her from putting the cows around the end of the Thoman's fence and driving them upstream to our herd. So we stood once more with the cows while Mickey drove her animals back along the fence, off the bottom and onto the bench and across it half a mile to the gate, and down to the river again.

When we added Mickey's cows to our cows the expanded herd began immediately to cross, taking a course downriver from the one we had chosen for them. Here the water ran shallower than it appeared from the bank, but we were careful anyway to give wide berth to the boulders, behind which the current gouges deep holes; falling into one of these, a panicked horse will attempt to climb on the swimming rider. In the early 70's, while the Thoman family was battling the federal government's campaign to condemn their deeded land along the river for the refuge, Mary's sister Cathy was drowned crossing the Green on horseback.

As soon as the cows reached the opposite shore they dove into the cottonwoods and willows and scattered; we put the horses after them, dodging and wheeling among the tree trunks, the down timber, and the shattered stumps, the raking branches and the underbrush. The cattle ran bawling and stomping, but within ten minutes we had flushed them from the breaks and set them moving together onto the bench and across the upland sagebrush turning lavender under the flat long strokes of the setting sun. The yellow grass had headed a month or six weeks early and the bentonite ground was parched to a hardness that went to powder under the animals' hooves, forcing me to raise my bandana against the dust and pollen and miniscule fragments of sagebrush. Thirty minutes later we put the cows through the gate onto new pasture. Then we rode down the river and crossed at a low

place, Mickey's Blue Heeler rolling his eye at me as he swam doggedly beside the horse. "Do you see," Mary asked, "where the sod is falling into the river? They tell us the cows do that, but the river undercuts the grass naturally. If the BLM comes out here tomorrow and finds any of our cows left, we'll be in trouble. I'll fly in the morning and see if I can spot any stragglers."

The Cessna appeared to pivot on one wing on the desert flat as we turned west again toward the river. From 500 feet up (7000 on the altimeter) the desert looked almost entirely barren, a lichenous pattern of spaced sagebrush spread over a pale gray floor pimpled with ant hills and stained white by alkali deposits. The smoke from fires in Washington, California, Oregon, Idaho, and Utah dimmed the sky, and I made out the Big Sandy fire burning up a canyon in the Wind River Range, 80 miles east across the Green River Basin and visible this morning only as a dark transitional shadow between the earth and the sky. Meandering south from the wide cofferdam restraining Fontenelle Reservoir the Green revealed its rust-colored bed, streaked by weedy greens above which white pelicans floated. The bottom was emerald on the east side of the river, but on the west side its intensity was muted and the polls of the cottonwoods showed gray and ugly. "The trees have been dying since they filled the reservoir," Mary explained as she brought the wing up. "Cottonwood seeds can't germinate without a layer of silt above them laid down by flooding. With the dam in place, there are no more spring floods, and without the floods the water table is dropping. Add to that the salty alkali ponds the refuge is providing, and there is no way for the trees to live. We can see those trees dying back a little every year; in another 15 or 20, they'll all be dead, except on the side of the river where we irrigate. But the environmentalists don't care. They think that because the government did it, everything is perfectly all right."

We scrutinized the bottom carefully and saw no cows on the refuge, but Mary was not willing to return to Kemmerer yet. In the groves along the banks and on the islands where the river braided, buildings constructed of logs hewn from the same cottonwoods stood in various stages of disrepair. Some of these, built by the early homesteaders, had been acquired by the Thomans and finally aban-

doned when, after a 20-year condemnation, the federals succeeded in forcing the family from the land on which they had established a prosperous ranch and raised six of their seven children. "All for a bird refuge, and we're not even on a major flyway," Mary said. This action followed by a decade the acquisition, also by the federal government, of the ranch's deeded land upriver, which though crucial to its operation for pasture and the production of a hay crop was desired by the United States Bureau of Reclamation to create a major water impoundment on the upper Green River. When the Bureau of Sports Fisheries approached them about taking the majority of their remaining land for the refuge, the Thomans decided it was time to make a stand against the government. They fought the condemnation for years at tremendous legal cost, but the law regarding takings was even less generous 25 years ago than it is today and their adversary had no incentive to compromise and no obligation to offer a land exchange. Instead, after accomplishing thievery by legal means, it admitted having neglected to secure an appropriation from Congress from which to make compensation: unable to offer full payment at the time of transfer, it dribbled checks in widely disparate amounts over a ten-year period to the Thoman Ranch, which could not tell from one month to the next how much money to expect and was for that reason incapable of either purchasing another ranch or rebuilding on higher ground above the river north of the refuge. At last, two weeks before Christmas while the family was burying their eldest son after he had been killed in a winter wreck on South Pass, the federals sent final payment and notified the Thomans that their patience was exhausted and that they would henceforth charge them a fine of \$500 for each day that they remained on the old ranch. By working through the winter with a backhoe, excavating the foundations and the water and sewer lines, the Thomans installed themselves in March on the new place, having incurred a penalty of \$15,000. In Mary's girlhood, there were no paved roads to Fontenelle, no electricity and no water; turning north again, she pointed out for me the white frame schoolhouse in which she and her brothers and sisters had been instructed by a teacher on the ranch and where she had taken her first steps on the road to a Ph.D.

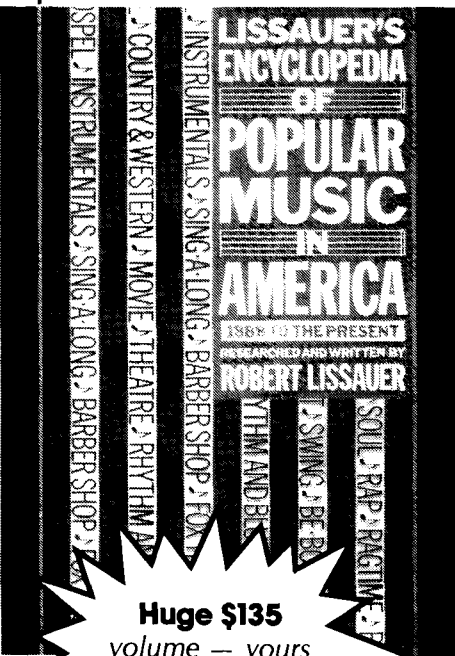
We flew north of the ranch, and circled it. "Is that you, Mary?" Mickey called up on the radio, and Mary assured her that the cows were now where they belonged. As the July sun heated the ground and the thermals rose, putting substantial bumps in the road, we took a southwest heading on the Kemmerer Airport, known to pilots as among the most hazardous in North America. The Exxon Corporation's La Barge Creek sour gas plant passed under the left wing, and also a few of its contributing wells. I had worked on one of these wells years before, in January of 1980, when the temperature reached 40 degrees below zero and the wind blew 60 miles an hour; the drilling crew was so bundled you couldn't tell them apart from each other and the heater in the derrick froze solid. Off the right wing 20 miles out, the tilted blue ridges—Absaroka, Indian, Commisary, Dempsey—ran north in parallel lines toward the Wyoming and Salt River ranges. So much country, so little time to get to know it all.

The windsock pointed northeast. Mary overflowed the airport and came around sharply north, preparing to land to the south. As the Cessna lowered toward the airstrip the runway lights flashed on, red over white, and suddenly the sock swung directly into line with our approach. I recalled another friend who had nearly caught a wingtip while attempting to land on this high mesa always subject to powerful shifting winds, but we were committed now. Mary made a nearly perfect three-point landing and taxied up to the gas pump. In spite of his many thousands of hours as a military pilot and since, the deputy sheriff to whom she leases the plane was once diverted by crosswinds seconds before touchdown onto the alternate east-west runway. "People ask me if I'm not afraid to fly a plane," Mary said. "I tell them that it's when I get on a horse that my life passes before my eyes nowadays."

She dropped me at the house and thanked me for my help with the cattle drive. "The ranchers are the best environmentalists Bruce Babbitt will ever find," she said. "The land has been such a part of our lives! Since the government took our deeded land, we've been completely dependent on the federal leases that Babbitt wants to 'reform.' When I talk about the last roundup, I'm not kidding anymore."

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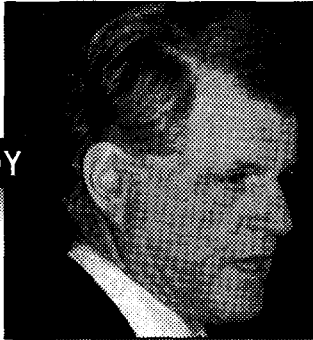
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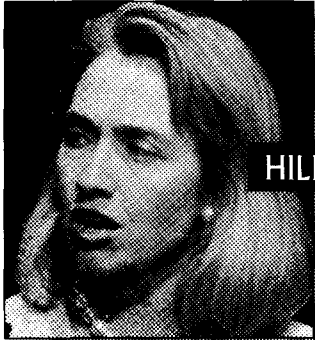
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